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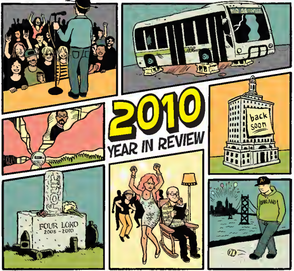

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CONTENTS

NEWS OPINION

4 **Letters**
8 **Editor's Note** *Express appoints new co-editors.*
9 **Seven Days** Reassessing Obama.
10 **Legalization Nation** Chronic Child Abuse?
11 **News** Berkeley settles library fight.
11 **News** A safer place to break the law?

YEAR IN REVIEW

13 **The Year the Buses Almost Died**
14 **The Electromagnetic Menace**
15 **The Year of the Lounge**
16 **Unhappy Medium**
17 **World of Punch Lines**
18 **The Life and Death of Four Loko**
20 **Closed for Business**

NEW YEAR'S EVE

21 **Top Ten Events**
21 **New Year's Eve & Day Listings**

ARTS CULTURE

23 **Culture Spy** Bordertown Skate Park.
24 **Event & Attraction Listings** Real Stones at 1515 Restaurant and Bar
26 **Museums & Galleries** *Recent Work at Slate Contemporary and Turbulent Mirror at Ken Douglas Gallery*
27 **Theater & Dance Listings**
28 **Theater Review** *A Merry Forking Christmas* at Off-Market Theaters.
29 **Lectures & Literary Listings** Story Builders at Oakland Public Library's Cesar Chavez Branch
30 **Body & Soul Listings** Christmas Day concert and dinner at Badarikashrama.
32 **Aquarius Age**

FOOD DRINK

35 **Dining Review** Trader Vic's.
36 **Restaurants & Cafes**
39 **Food & Wine Listings**

MOVIES

40 **Movie Review** *True Grit* and *Casino Jack*.
41 **Movie Listings**
43 **One-Night Stands**

MUSIC

44 **Ode to the Walkmen**
46 **Live Review** Brother Ali at the New Parish
48 **CD Reviews** Keyshia Cole, Girl Talk, and T.I.
48 **Local Licks** Shutoyer Union, Loren Davidson, Thomas Carnacki, and Victory & Associates and Hurry Up Shotgun
50 **Concerts & Club Listings**
54 **DJ & Dance Listings**
57 **Savage Love**

On the Cover Illustrations by Jesse Reklaw.

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Please send a résumé, cover letter, and examples of your work to *Express* coeditor Kathleen Richards, 620 3rd Street, Oakland, CA 94607 or Kathleen.Richards@EastBayExpress.com. No phone calls, please.

LETTERS

Castles in the Sand

Good article on desert solar and the environment, but the economics were not explored. The sun is dilute requiring the 5.6 square-mile "footprint" described, but there's a further limitation. Solar panels get no light at night. They are effective only when the sun is most direct about 6-8 hours a day. Thus the 370-megawatt output alleged for Ivanpah is misleading. Power averaged over the year comes to something like 100 megawatts. Company statistics for all plants quoted are actually 65-75 percent lower.

By contrast the gas plant across the valley is rated at 500 megawatts. Gas plants are run around the clock, produce power 24/7. Over a year they'll typically run 80 percent of the time, giving an effective megawattage of 400, four times that of BrightSource's facility. And no other plant will have to be kept running in parallel to give electricity at night. The gas plant sits on one-tenth the area of the solar plant. Megawatt for megawatt, you're damaging only one-fortieth of the area, and you get to surf the web at night after work as well!

Promotion of solar goes back to the 1970s, but even now provides only 1 percent of our electricity. The dilute quality of the sun's rays requires a huge expense. When Ivanpah was approved earlier this year, BrightSource had put up only $160 million of its own money. The Obama administration put up the rest in the form of $1.34 billion loan guarantee out of stimulus funds (the bailout). That's a 90 percent subsidy on construction. Add to that the 30 percent subsidy on operations and the 33 percent guaranteed market (by law) plus state subsidies. Now you can see why there is such interest in solar contraptions in the desert. It's the taxpayers, Stupid!

And the ratepayers. When ratepayers find out that they're expected to pay three to five times more for solar-generated electricity than they would for real power from a real power plant, it will be the Tea Party all over again. Unfortunately, we will find ourselves with 1000 square miles of wrecked desert that can't repair itself. That is the Obama's stated plan for solar build-out.

Castles in the sand, indeed. Impeachment, anybody?

Steve Tabor, Oakland

The Lesser of Two Evils

Thanks for your article about building solar power plants in deserts. We environmentalists have been arguing about this for several years. It basically comes down to the usual Democrats v. Greens debate (do you support the lesser of evils or advocate for what you really believe?) plus whether you are the type of environmentalist who believes in technological solutions or the type who realizes that we must lower our consumption while also using the least harmful technology available.

Overconsumption and overpopulation are the roots of all environmental problems. As your article clearly shows, there will be no magical technological solution to the environmental and ecological problems caused by consumption of too much energy. The proper solutions to residential electricity overconsumption are to put solar panels and wind generators on every roof and to build those solar and

Letters Policy

Please provide your full name, address, and daytime phone number, although we will only print your name, city, and affiliation. Send submissions to Letters@EastBayExpress.com or Letters, *East Bay Express*, 620 3rd St., Oakland, CA 94607. Letters are edited for length and clarity.

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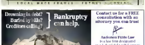
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wind plants in the cities and other areas where the electricity is being consumed. Power lines in otherwise natural areas are not only ugly, they're also environmentally destructive.

Because of the ecological and environmental harms outlined in your article and because of the aesthetic and ecological harms caused by power lines I strongly oppose the supposed "clean energy" solar plants, which are actually very dirty in environmental and ecological terms.

Jeff Hoffman San Francisco

Reduce Power Demand

The arrival at the newsstands of the *Express* with the "Oakland [Solar] Invades the Desert" article and the arrival in the Bay Area of the new electric plug-in hybrid from Nissan called the Leaf all brings up the techno-fix vs. city design issue that is at the base of solving our long-term environmental problems.

Solar electric generation in the desert does take up a fair amount of land but car-dependent "sprawl" development takes up many times more. As the *Express* article points out, both sides of the pro- and anti-desert solar electric power plants are trying to solve environmental problems, problems that ecological city design would solve in an even more fundamental and much larger way.

The electric car requires energy from some place, and, along with the arrival of the Leaf, PG&E gave us a hint of things to come on the demand side, demand that would be caused by trying to put our car-based transportation system on electricity. PG&E warns us that they will have to track neighborhoods where the Leaf ends up because these cars will add greatly to the demand for electricity, demanding upgrades and more generation from somewhere — desert solar, oil, nukes, hydro? — requiring higher capacity wires, transformers, new generation capacity, etc.

Basically, electric cars are not only far more energy- not to speak land- inefficient than public transit systems and bicycle access that can be provided by compact apartment in town living, but electric cars have to cart around an extra few hundred pounds of batteries per person that simply does not exist when electricity is delivered by wire to streetcars, electric trolleys and BART, and of course bicyclists don't carry around multi-hundred-pound batteries in their baskets. The electric car hybrid or pure is an energy- and land-squandering disaster — get used to it! It is an integral part of a destructive city layout and design that perpetuates one of humanity's worst mistakes: building cities for cars instead of people.

The demand side solution is cities that move resolutely away from cars — including the electric cars that provide green cover for yet more sprawl and massive new energy demand, no matter where the electricity may come from.

Best of both worlds: less demand in the first place and solar energy from the desert but not to be massive in scale to support cars in badly designed cities.

Richard Register
author, Ecocities: Rebuilding Cities in Balance with Nature, Oakland

Solar Is Better Than the Alternative

The article, "Oakland Invades the Desert," has a lot of good information and makes many useful points. However, it misses the big picture. Global warming is threatening millions of species and the future of humanity. The article only acknowledges this problem begrudgingly saying that solar companies "believe they're doing something good."

The fact is that they are doing something good. The earth can only absorb about 8 billion tons of CO_2 per year, just over one ton per person on the planet. But right now the world produces about 32 billion tons of CO_2 per year, over 4 tons per person. The US produces about 20 tons per person. This simply can't go on. All electricity needs to be generated by solar, wind, and other renewables, and all transportation needs to run on clean electricity or low carbon footprint biofuels. Use of fossil fuels simply must be stopped.

Large-scale solar is part of the solution. Yes, that will impact the desert. And yes, we should protect as much habitat as possible. But all of the energy for the US could be generated by an area less than 100 miles x 100 miles of photovoltaic cells. Of course, that's a lot, but it is less than 3/10 of 1 percent of the US area. So it is simply not true that "the entire California desert is under siege by solar power developers."

The problem with the article is that it does not understand the urgency of getting off of fossil fuels. Instead of portraying a 250-megawatt plant as "massive" or a 1,000 megawatt plant as a "leviathan," we should be working to find ways to build plants 10 or 100 times these sizes. The US consumes 360 billion kilowatt hours per month. To generate that much electricity, we need on the order of two thousand of the 1,000-megawatt plants.

While conservation, rooftop solar panels, more windmills, and other such efforts should also be part of the solution, and would reduce the need for many of these new solar plants, the dire situation on the planet makes large-scale solar a very beneficial effort.

Jack Lucero Fleck, Oakland

Do It Ourselves

As chair of the local Sierra Club chapter's Conservation Committee and a delegate to the state-level conservation committee, I have followed the desert solar issue with some interest but limited information. I thought you did a nice job of making the controversial look like a bunch of [illegible] developers looking [illegible]. The other story is the issue coming up on the outside, local generation of solar power with retrofits of existing structures. Big business wants to have our solar from "far away places with strange sounding names" so we can continue to pay them for what we could do on our own roofs.

Arthur Boone, Oakland

Look at the Numbers

Both liberal and conservative economists have studied dozens of sports stadium deals over the last several decades. These academics are not paid by interested parties and their studies nearly all conclude that new stadiums do nothing for the host cities or actually worsen their local economies. A few weeks ago the cost to the city of an environmental impact report was said to be $350,000. Already the expected cost has more than doubled to $750,000. Before an EIR is commissioned, City Hall should make a credible case to Oakland residents on economic grounds. It is not enough that a mayor-elect, already known for being arithmetically challenged when she speaks on public issues, merely hopes a stadium will help pull Oakland out of the national recession.

Charles Pine, Oakland

Local Businesses Should Get Dibs

What I hope is that the existing businesses (especially Peerless) get offered first dibs on the retail space in the new park. I think a brewery in a ballpark would be really cool (even if it's coffee!)!! Knowing Lew Wolff, he'd probably want a Starbucks or Dunkin Donuts in there instead.

Jan Richards, Oakland

Small Businesses for Valdez Triangle

The Valdez Triangle development plan is a story unto itself, independent of the new ball park boondoggle. I admit that I have a soft spot for the area bordered by 24th, Broadway, Harrison/the lake, and 27th streets. It is a very walkable, bikeable quiet area with some art spaces, including the thriving "Creative Growth" center. The buildings are lower and don't tower like the high rises nearby. The sun shines onto the street and the apartment rents are cheap. This plan is being popularly represented as a plan for Broadway Auto Row, where many people would like to see change. But there is no real plan for that corridor beyond condo developments. Currently the plan on the table is to build a large retail complex in the above-mentioned Broadway Valdez Triangle, and hopefully lure some "anchor tenants." Names currently being talked about are Macy's and Nordstrom's, which is pretty laughable, considering the mixed success of the recent Westfield mall in SF, etc. Is retail space a sustainable plan in the Internet shopping age? Maybe. But don't we have tons of vacant retail space in Oakland? Yes we do. Is more soon-to-be vacant retail space what we want to spend our redevelopment funds on? I think not. Why doesn't Jean Quan set up a contest between local business plans for funds to rejuvenate derelict space already built and available? There are lots of this kind of environmentally responsible, small-business-friendly redevelopment plans that would be a refreshing change of pace.

If I wanted bloat like a new mall instead of a quiet neighborhood, I would have voted for Don Perata. Of course, Signature and Waverly properties, primary owners in the area, are pleased. They've been trying to bulldoze the area for over fifteen years. Let's not give them our tax money to help them do it.

Izzar Dahl, Oakland

980 Park Is Better

Contrary to statements made by Oakland city officials, 980 Park, a baseball park envisioned on the air rights of the I-980 freeway between 14th and 18th streets, is capable of meeting the same time schedule as Victory Court.

Victory Court and 980 Park are both subject to environmental studies to be reviewed by Caltrans. In the case of Victory Court, it is dependent on freeway improvements that can be studied as part of the I-880/Broadway/Jackson Improvement Project. Currently, Victory Court and for that matter all of Jack London Square and Chinatown are served by one pair of I-880 freeway ramps at Oak/Jackson. These ramps already perform poorly and will clearly be overwhelmed by Victory Court and its 2,500-car garage at its current ramp terminals, not to mention future backups on mainline freeway.

The I-880 study envisions improving the performance of the freeway, especially the access and egress from the Posey tube to Alameda. The I-880 study, initiated in 2006, is already gravely ill because it hasn't received approval from the Oakland Chinatown community due to the overwhelming traffic impacts from all the new proposals since. Hence, the EIR that is scheduled to require 24 months has not yet even been started.

980 Park would also require Caltrans approval to build a ballpark on its air-rights. Think about connecting the three bridges over the freeway where the freeway is already depressed! Caltrans has stated that this process could be completed in 24 months! Therefore, what is needed ASAP is for city officials to negotiate a cooperative agreement to study 980 Park.

Why do this? Because the 980 Park alternative would require an investment of $25 million versus $200 million for the Victory Court proposal. Projected property tax and land rent is estimated at $100 million over the life to the facility. Our profligate Oakland city officials want to provide a $100 million subsidy for Victory Court when they could reap a $75 million profit if they promoted 980 Park.

Bryan Grunwald, Oakland

[illegible] 12/1

Tweets Are Awesome

I really don't see why anyone is taking issue here? The WHOLE POINT of Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, and the rest of the social-media networks is that they link us together in ways we've never been linked before. A single tweet is a drop in the bucket, so the more tweets a politician has, the more chances there are someone will hear the message they want to hear. It's not Jean's fault if you only use Twitter once a month and have less than ten followers. Sorry, don't follow Jean then, if you don't want 90 percent of your wall to be Twitter posts from her. Twitter is awesome! The more tweets the better! Just be sure to keep them relevant AND as an avid follower of www.twitter.com/jeanquan, I LOVE every one :-D

Kevin Mann, Oakland

Once Considered a Has-Been, [illegible] Is Staging a Comeback [illegible] 12/1

Transphobic Cocktail

Please be aware of your language. Stating that "Rosemary Collins — a transgendered Tom Collins" is a transphobic statement, shows a lack of knowledge and respect for the the transgendered communities, and is unnecessary. Having statements such as this in newspapers makes it appear acceptable to the general public and is not okay.

Dora Khambatta, Oakland

[illegible] 12/1

Oakland Should Be Punished

The card might help the poor and homeless and others who might fall prey to check cashing shops or being robbed of their cash. However, if you are illegal in this country then you are what it means: illegal and should not be given any special privileges. Entering the country the correct way takes time and money. For example, my wife entering as a fiancée was not allowed a California ID until her status was approved six months after legal entry by homeland security. A city like Oakland that harbors and coddles illegals should be slapped by the federal government. Withholding money is surely yet to come.

Jim Zygmis, Oakland

[illegible] 12/1

Worth the Buy

Blood/Candy is a wonderful album. Great lyrical twists and turns and lots of unusual moments for a band stuck with the "power pop" tag for so long. I love the album and have it in heavy rotation in my car. "So Caroline" is a divine creation, absolute pop perfection. That track ALONE is worth the price of the album.

Fred Cooper, Hollywood

Don't Dilute Our Trademark, Letters, 12/8

Zzzzz ...

Obviously the desert lawyer Mr. Eichler has never heard of the popular expression "technicolor yawn."

Jim Boser, Oakland

Corrections

In our 12/15 Culture Spy, "A Comic Death and Resurrection," we attributed the incorrect relationship to the surviving relatives of Rory Root and Comic Relief. The surviving relatives are the current owners, not the prospective owners. The possible new owner is completely unaffiliated with the store.

In 12/1 news story, "The New Parkway?," we misspelled J. Moses Ceaser's name. ●

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EDITOR'S NOTE

EXPRESS APPOINTS NEW CO-EDITORS

Reporter Robert Gammon and Managing Editor Kathleen Richards are promoted

The *East Bay Express* announced last week the appointment of Robert Gammon and Kathleen Richards as co-editors of the newspaper. Gammon, a long-time investigative reporter for the *Express*, will handle the news operations of the paper, and Richards, formerly the *Express* managing editor, will oversee arts, culture, food, and music.

"Kathleen and Bob are going to make a terrific team," said Jay Youngdahl, president of the *Express*. "Bob is a tenacious, hard news journalist, and Kathleen has her finger on the pulse of the East Bay's vibrant arts scene. Together, we're determined to make the *Express* the best alternative newsweekly in the nation for our size — and have a great time doing it."

Gammon has been a journalist for fifteen years, and has been with the *Express* since 2004. He's won numerous awards over the years. Before joining the *Express*, Gammon was the investigative reporter of the *Oakland Tribune*. He has specialized in government watchdog reporting, exposing political corruption and incompetence.

"I'm proud to become co-editor of the *Express*," Gammon said. "I grew up reading the paper and I think Kathleen and I will make a great team. She's a great journalist, and we have a first-rate staff. I want to thank Jay for giving me this opportunity. We have some big shoes to fill, but we're going to kick some butt, and have a lot of fun."

Richards has been the managing editor of the *Express* since 2007. Her 2009 investigative stories on Yelp's questionable business practices won several awards, made national headlines, and resulted in the company changing its policies.

Richards started her career at the *Express* as an intern, and has also been the paper's clubs editor and a staff writer. She began her career in music journalism, and founded and edited a local music magazine called *Bay Area Buzz*. She is a graduate of UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism, and was raised in Berkeley.

"I'm excited and honored to be taking on the role of co-editor of the *Express* with Bob," Richards said. "We're both dedicated to the company and to putting out the best editorial product we can. We've got a great team and I'm looking forward to meeting our challenge head-on."

Gammon and Richards will be taking over the position held by longtime *Express* editor Stephen Buel, who is moving on after nearly a decade with the paper. "I want to thank Steve for his tremendous dedication to the *Express* over the years," Youngdahl said. "He's an excellent journalist, and I want to wish him luck on his future endeavors." ■

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SEVEN DAYS

REASSESSING OBAMA

After the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the president's record deserves another look. Plus, California passes cap-and-trade.

By Robert Gammon

Before the midterm elections, the conventional wisdom was that President **Barack Obama**'s first twenty months in office had hovered between disappointment and disaster. Yet thanks to a flurry of activity in the past month, voters may decide to reassess Obama's early record. Of particular note was the historic Senate vote over the weekend that finally put an end to the **Pentagon**'s bigoted "**Don't Ask, Don't Tell**" policy.

To his credit, Obama never gave up on repealing the ban on gays and lesbians serving openly in the US military, even though the historic effort looked like it was dead in the water earlier this month. Conservative Senate Republicans led by **John McCain** had successfully blocked the repeal when it was part of a defense authorization bill. At that point, it looked like game over. Everyone knew that when Republicans take over the House in January, they would kill any hope of enacting the repeal for at least two years.

But then Senators **Joe Lieberman**, **Susan Collins**, and **Harry Reid**, along with help from the White House, pressed forward with a stand-alone bill to repeal DADT. First, the House, still controlled by Democrats and led by **Nancy Pelosi**, approved the new bill. And then, on December 18, the Senate voted 65-31 to stop discriminating against those who want to serve and die for their country.

Of course, it was pathetic that it took the nation so long to finally do the right thing — but it was nonetheless a historic achievement for the president. For progressives, it also helped heal the wounds inflicted by the passage of Obama's tax-cut deal with Republicans late last week. That agreement extended the Bush tax cuts for the rich — a move that promises to add $700 billion to the nation's out-of-control debt, and likely paved the way for more debilitating government cuts in 2011.

Liberals hated the deal and contended that Obama had sold out one of his core principles. But for the president, historians may look back on the tax-cut measure as a shrewd move. In one bold stroke, the president undercut many of the lunatic claims leveled against him by the far-right during the past two years. After all, how could a communist Muslim from Kenya strike a deal with conservatives to give tax cuts to the wealthy?

The tax-cut deal also isn't that bad — it included some holiday gifts for the rest of us. It extends tax cuts for the middle-class and low-income families. It extends jobless benefits for the long-term unemployed for thirteen more months. And it includes a payroll tax cut that economists say could stimulate the still-sagging economy.

In fact, in retrospect, Obama's record so far seems impressive. Yes, unemployment is still at unacceptable levels and the foreclosure crisis continues to haunt us, but the much-criticized bank and auto bailouts appear to have been successful. The president also pushed through both a Wall Street reform package and the most significant overhaul of the nation's health-care system since at least the 1960s.

One of the few disappointments was the failure to pass climate-change legislation. Another setback arrived over the weekend when conservative Senate Republicans blocked passage of the **Dream Act** — a landmark immigration reform measure that would have provided a path to citizenship for children of illegal immigrants who go to college or serve in the military.

California Passes Cap-and-Trade

Although the federal government failed to deal with the coming climate crisis, California met the challenge head-on. Late last week, the state **Air Resources Board** adopted virtually the same cap-and-trade system that Obama wanted for the nation. The new system, the first of its kind in the country, caps the amount of greenhouse gases that a polluter can emit, while allowing polluters to buy "credits" from clean-energy producers. The market-based system thus makes carbon-emitters less profitable and green-tech more profitable. It will go into effect in 2012 and is designed to slash greenhouse gases by more than 20 percent by 2020.

Oakland Pot Farms Questioned

Oakland's plan to tax and regulate four large medical cannabis farms was questioned this month by Alameda County District Attorney **Nancy O'Malley**, California Watch first reported. O'Malley sent a letter to Mayor-elect **Jean Quan**, raising some of the same concerns expressed by the Obama administration and Oakland City Attorney **John Russo**. At issue is whether Oakland's plan to tax the farms as separate business entities from medical pot dispensaries violates state law. O'Malley also raised concerns over whether Oakland political officials will be held criminally liable by the feds. The **Oakland City Council** was scheduled to address the controversy Tuesday night.

Three-Dot Roundup

Governor-elect **Jerry Brown** warned educators to "fasten their seatbelt" and prepare for big cuts in public school funding as the state grapples with a projected $25 billion deficit.

A preliminary report by federal regulators indicated that the deadly San Bruno pipeline blast might have been caused by faulty welds that **PG&E** didn't know existed. … **UC Regents** raised the employee retirement age and slashed contributions to retiree health care in order to bridge a $21 billion budget gap. … The state **Supreme Court** upheld open primaries in California, meaning that voters will be able to cast ballots for any candidates they choose, regardless of party affiliation. … **Facebook**'s sales are expected to top $2 billion this year, more than double last year's. … And **Twitter** reported that its value has reached a staggering $3.7 billion. ●

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LEGALIZATION NATION

CHRONIC CHRIST MASS?

Examining the evidence that some of Jesus' minor miracles were the work of medical cannabis

By David Downs

As the day of **Jesus** birth sweeps across the land, a sect of Christians will be celebrating with more than **Christmas** trees. A rising tide of Christians not only smoke pot, but think Jesus used the drug. They're gaining mainstream legitimacy, challenging religious and political dogma, and sometimes going to jail for their faith in unprecedented numbers. Sure, Jesus rocked some sandals, a beard, robes and a message of everlasting love, but did he round out his hippie persona with dope?

According to pot historian **Chris Bennett**'s chapter on "Early/Ancient History" in **Dr. Julie Holland**'s *The Pot Book* (*Park Street Press*, 2010), Jesus didn't smoke pot, he rubbed it on people in the form of medicinal holy oil. Archaeological evidence shows Mesopotamia had been rife with the stuff since the time of the Assyrians until four hundred years after Jesus' death. Through a strange story of linguistics, being a Christian literally means "a person with pot oil smeared over their face," Bennett said.

Bennett's a self-described Vancouver stoner/surfer-turned-hemp activist and weed historian. In short, he has a credibility problem. But the 48-year-old high school drop-out has become a leading authority on the topic. He's published three books, one with **Neal McQueen**, who speaks ancient Hebrew and is getting a Ph.D. in Religious Studies. **C. Scott Littleton**, former professor at Occidental College, blurbed his last book as follows:

"As Chris Bennett amply demonstrates in this seminal book, the ritual use of cannabis has a very long history. It extends from Vedic India in the second millennium B.C.E., where the hallucinogen in question was known as Soma, classical Greece, ancient Israel where it appears as kaneh bosem ... I heartily recommend Bennett's book to anyone seeking a better understanding of this well nigh universal, albeit all too often misunderstood hallucinogen and its crucial role in the history of human spirituality."

The **King James Bible** doesn't contain any of this stuff for two reasons: a mistranslation from Hebrew to Greek by **Alexander the Great**'s people, and **Constantine**'s suppression of the **Gnostic Gospels**. Bennett points to Polish comparative etymologist **Sula Benet**, who discovered in 1936 that the original Hebrew word kaneh bosem — literally "sweet cane" — had been mistranslated as "calamus." Versions of the Hebrew word "kaneh bosem" appear five times in the original Hebrew Old Testament. Moses made holy oil with it and preached underneath its spell, Bennett says.

Working with McQueen on *Sex, Drugs, Violence and the Bible*, Bennett says the two found text references to Jesus' use of pot oil in the Gnostic Gospels. In the **Acts of Thomas** and elsewhere there are references to Jesus' "unguent box" and "pouch of medicine." These books were cut when Constantine consolidated Christianity under one book. Only the Gnostic **Book of Revelations** — where plant medicine is considered a form of sorcery — made the cut. Even some fundamentalist Christians have waged a war against the "devil" weed. All of these suppressed texts have since come out through leading scholars like **Elaine Pagels**.

Bennett said a pot doctor Jesus makes more sense than a deity Jesus, Son of God pulls a lot of lightweight miracles like treating skin lesions, stomach problems, menstrual issues, eye problems, epilepsy and asthma, all of which respond to cannabis therapies. "These theories that he was performing supernatural miracles, I just kind of think that's just less believable than the idea that it was knowledge of plants like other cultures, where use of plants was considered spiritual," he said.

The ancient Jews had a love-hate relationship with the tall, fragrant cane stalks of hemp, according to the original **Old Testament**. First **Jehovah** spoke to **Moses** through it, but later Jehovah rejected sacrifices with pot-infused oil because of its foreign roots. By the time of Jesus' birth, pot use was restricted to royalty and Jewish priests like the **Levites**, Bennett says. "There's no way to know who taught Jesus how to heal with pot oil, but there's a huge gap between Jesus' alleged virgin birth and the time he begins to minister. It's possible Jesus learned it from outlaw priests," Bennett speculates. Supplies would've come from traders along the Mediterranean coast. No one knows for sure.

Since the 19th century with French poet **Gérard de Nerval**, stories of chronic-tinged Christianity have grown. Rastafarian use of pot combined with Christian ideas started to flourish by the 20th century, and in the past, the Internet is now driving the debate, Bennett said. "The tide is always rising. I think that even if I drop dead tomorrow, god forbid, the idea would keep perpetuating and growing," he said. "It's the type of thing people scoff at and then they look at it and they go, 'Oh, hey, there's something to this.' It's not easily poo-poo'd."

Sites like **Google Books** are putting entire libraries online, allowing for new research and spreading news of persecuted chronic Christians. **Hawaiian THC Ministries** leader **Roger Christie** has become somewhat of a cause célèbre online, after he was arrested on federal weed trafficking charges in July. Christie is being held without bail as a "dangerous society" with trial set for April 2011.

Bennett has also brought his own case against the Canadian government for denying his request for a religious exemption to the country's anti-pot laws. "I think sooner or later there'll be some documentary on *National Geographic* or something like that and they'll go into it and then the idea will really spread all over the place," he said. "Once it's out it's hard to put back in the bag." ●

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This column is culled from our blog of the same name.

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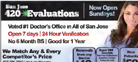

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BERKELEY SETTLES LIBRARY FIGHT

The city council has agreed to a partial deal that will allow the remodel of two branch libraries. But it could still allow the demolition and rebuild of two others.

By Judith Scherr

For months, Berkeley's four branch libraries have been at the center of a battle pitting preservationists against those who say seismic and accessibility upgrades can't be done without tearing down two of the library buildings and starting from scratch. But then last week, the **Berkeley City Council** approved a partial settlement of a lawsuit brought by a preservationist group known as the **Concerned Library Users**. The settlement allows remodeling of the **Claremont** and **North Branch** libraries to move forward but puts on hold the demolition and rebuilding of the **South** and **West** branches.

"I think it's tragic that they're stopping community libraries in predominantly minority communities," said Councilmember **Darryl Moore**, who sits as a trustee on the library board. "I hope they reach [complete] agreement."

Judith Epstein, spokesperson for the preservationist group, says it's possible to both save historic features of the libraries and satisfy mandates to make the libraries completely accessible to disabled people and earthquake safe. "It doesn't have to be one or the other," she said.

The preservationists' lawsuit against the city, filed in September, challenges a law passed by the city council in July that makes it easier to demolish the South and West branch libraries by requiring a use permit rather than a more stringent one known as a "variance." The lawsuit argues that before the council passed the ordinance, the city should have conducted an environmental impact review of the law itself — not just of the library projects. The settlement between the preservationists and the city addresses this question and allows remodeling at the North and Claremont branch libraries to go forward, while requiring repeal of the law. The council rescinded the law last week.

Under the settlement agreement, an environmental impact report of the now withdrawn law will be conducted as part of the EIR on remodeling the Claremont and North branch libraries, neither of which require demolition. Then once the EIR is conducted, the council can reinstate the law that facilitates library demolition — if it chooses to do so. "Now citizens have a chance to participate," Epstein said, referring to the EIR process that requires citizen involvement.

But the piece of the lawsuit that remains unsettled is the question of whether funds for library demolition and rebuilding can come from **Measure FF**, approved by voters in November 2008. The lawsuit quotes from the measure stating that the bonds can only "renovate, expand, and make seismic and access improvements" to the libraries. The suit argues that these funds cannot be used for demolition.

The city and the preservationist group continue in confidential discussions around the use of Measure FF funds for demolition — and the question of whether demolition and reconstruction is the best choice for renovating the South and West branch libraries. ●

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A piece by Kyle in Oakland.

A SAFER PLACE TO BREAK THE LAW?

Some graffiti artists say Oakland's cop layoffs have made the city a destination

By Ellen Cushing

When the City of Oakland laid off eighty of its police officers in July — leaving the city among the most under-policed of those nationwide — nobody quite knew what this would mean for the city's crime rate. While recent statistics have shown that violent crime is down this year, those involved with the local graffiti scene say the layoffs have made Oakland, always a popular destination for would-be graffiti writers, even more attractive.

According to members of the local graffiti community, whose names have been changed herein, Oakland's thriving above-ground art scene, coupled with a populace that may be more appreciative of street art than most, has always made the city something of a destination for painters from all over the Bay Area. Kyle, who's originally from Walnut Creek but recently moved to Oakland specifically for its graffiti scene, said that even before the layoffs, kids he knew from the suburbs would routinely show up at popular walls in Oakland. "It's like if you're an aspiring actress, you're going to go to Hollywood," he said. "And if you're an aspiring bomber, you're going to come to Oakland. Everyone knows you're never going to get acknowledged writing in Concord all day."

But now that the city's cops are stretched thinner than ever before, those in the community say the perception — real or imagined — that Oakland's now a safer place to break the law has made the city much more popular for those who want to engage in illegal art without getting caught. "I've definitely seen the migration from those areas east of the tunnel," Kyle said. "It's just a reality that Oakland is a safer place to paint now."

The resultant irony is that Oakland's scene is now dominated largely by people from outside the city. "The current Oakland heads — the main people — aren't from Oakland," Kyle said. What critics of the cop layoff worried would make the city less hospitable to business and tourism and less safe for citizens is having the opposite effect on illegal artists.

Sam, who lives in the Oakland hills, said he's met people who travel from as far away as Sacramento, the Central Valley, and the Peninsula to paint, and that he and his friends have been doing graffiti both more frequently and more brazenly than they did before, simply because they feel the risk is low. "There's definitely this idea, like, there are less cops, that means we can paint more," he said. "It's actually nice being able to calm down a little and worry less about the cops, because they're out solving more important crimes."

And Steven, who lives in San Francisco but routinely comes across the bay to paint, said the combination of the cop layoffs and the already-robust scene has resulted in an "explosion" of illegal art, particularly in Oakland's industrial and commercial areas. "Everyone is taking advantage of the streets," he said.

Further, Kyle said, the perception is that even if Oakland police do make a graffiti-related arrest, government budget cuts mean writers may slip through the legal system's cracks. Kyle was arrested just after the layoffs and said that he's yet to be served — and what's more, that he doubts he will be at all. "They're just so backlogged when it came to my case, they just haven't dealt with it," he surmised. "I sort of feel like they forgot."

According to **David Ferguson** of the city's Public Works Department, the number of graffiti-related calls to the department's citizen hotline — an imperfect and seasonally affected measure — have actually decreased slightly from 2009, nearly almost seven hundred in the nearly six months between July and mid-December, compared to 1,600 in the full year that began in July 2009.

But even if the number of incidents has remained stagnant, Kyle said he and his friends are seeing a "definite rise" in both the volume of Oakland graffiti writers as well as their frequency and audacity. "It's like a playground now," he said. ●

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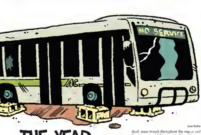

Jesse Rubow

THE YEAR THE BUSES ALMOST DIED

Despite a recent settlement deal with bus drivers, AC Transit had a bumpy 2010, and next year promises to be no better

By Nick Sucharski

The hard-fought agreement last month between **AC Transit** and its bus drivers helped stave off potentially devastating service cuts — making it an early departure from this year's play-by-play events. In what seemed to be a rollercoaster ride of a year filled with 15 percent service reductions, route eliminations, and driver sickout days, the settlement felt more like a victory for East Bay riders than another stab at their commutes.

Yet in truth, most AC Transit bus lines experienced far more negatives than positives in 2010. They began running later and ending service earlier; some bus lines absorbed others in an effort to consolidate routes, and riders saw their late-night service essentially terminated. The recession deserves much of the blame. Indeed, mass transit throughout the region and the nation saw debilitating cuts. It was the year the buses almost died.

Bay Area transit agencies attempted to deal with the economic crisis in 2009 with a frenzy of fare hikes. But a 25-cent fare increase proved to be nowhere near enough for AC Transit to avoid service cuts this year. Faced with a huge deficit in March, the agency slashed service by nearly 8 percent, forcing many riders to choose between waiting more than a half hour for a bus or use their car.

Paul Rage, a senior at **UC Berkeley**, says he drives his car now instead of riding the bus if he can help it. "One of the biggest issues that I've had with the bus system out here is the clumping together of buses," he said. Rage said he frequently found himself waiting for a bus for more than thirty minutes, when it was supposed to arrive in less than half that time, only to watch three buses on the same line arrive one after the other. Even the digital signals that are supposed to show arrival times proved to be somewhat unreliable for him, as did real-time data from **NextBus.com**, he said.

The second round of service reductions in October slashed bus service by an additional 7 percent, cutting bus frequency even further. Last month's arbitration deal put off more cuts to weeknight and weekend service, but Rage, who works on campus some nights until 10 p.m. and takes the 1 or 1R bus home, said he still feels victimized from the earlier cuts. Most times the wait for a bus can be more than thirty minutes at that time of the night, he said.

Rachel Dulaney, who commutes from her **Lake Merritt** home to **San Francisco State University**, where she works as a security guard, said she barely uses AC Transit at all now. Sharing the car with her wife proved to be a frustration-free alternative to taking the bus, she said. Ever since AC Transit moved the 58L seven blocks farther from her home and reduced service on it, she said her commute time has nearly doubled. "My feet aren't what they used to be," she said.

The bigger problem of service reductions, Dulaney said, is the effect they're having on commuters without a car. Roughly 120,000 people in the East Bay depend on public transit to get to work, according to **the US Census Bureau**. And longer mass transit commutes result in a tired work force. "They're going to be waking up earlier and coming home later," Dulaney noted. "The next time I ride the bus, it'll be with a bunch of zombies."

The arbitrated agreement between AC Transit and the bus drivers' union closed the door on any more cuts this year, said **Clarence Johnson**, a spokesperson for the transit agency. In fact, AC Transit was the only Bay Area transportation agency to reach such a concession deal with its drivers' union. But it wasn't easy. When AC Transit first imposed a new contract in July that included more than $15 million a year in compensation cuts, more than two hundred drivers went on a sickout. The bus drivers' union then sued for arbitration, which ultimately resulted in last month's settlement.

And 2011 could turn out to be just as difficult. The future of bus service quality in the East Bay, and elsewhere, will depend on whether the nation awakens from its financial nightmare. Plus, nearly 80 percent of **Federal Transportation Administration** funding goes to highways, leaving just 20 percent for public transportation, according to the FTA, which means transit agencies will have to keep fending for themselves in an unstable economy. In the end, fares, local taxes and state and federal funding may not be enough to keep the agencies afloat. If that were to happen, further amputations to the system may prove fatal. ●

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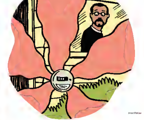

THE ELECTROMAGNETIC MENACE

It was the year of the EMF backlash: SmartMeters. Cell phones. Towers and antennas. None of it safe, all of it under the watchful eye of riled-up activists

By Nate Seltenrich

In 2010, electromagnetic radiation took huge strides toward becoming the environmental-health cause célèbre of concerned citizens from Maine to Marin. Here in the East Bay, neighborhood groups fought fiercely against cell tower propositions and **SmartMeter** installations as awareness of the potential health impacts of wireless signals spread at least as fast as the technologies themselves.

Concerns over electromagnetic radiation are nothing new, and neither are the counter-arguments that insist there's nothing to worry about. But 2010 provided the debate a critical spark in the form of **PG&E**'s new wireless meters, 1.8 million of which have already been installed on homes and businesses throughout the East Bay. Rather than requiring monthly visits from a reader, SmartMeters transmit up-to-the-moment usage data to PG&E wirelessly.

These transmissions put residents at risk of radiation, argue opponents like El Cerrito's **Marti Kheel**, who created a Facebook group called **Stop Smart Meters Now** in September. It claims 145 members from the Bay Area and beyond. "PG&E sprung this on people and started putting it on their homes before they had any idea what it was," said Kheel, a visiting scholar in UC Berkeley's Department of Science, Policy, and Management. "As soon as people started learning about it, they started getting outraged."

Driven by health concerns, Kheel also launched a group called **El Cerrito Residents Against Smart Meters**. She's formally requested that the El Cerrito City Council adopt a moratorium on SmartMeter installations, as the Marin County town of Fairfax did in August. She's worked at the national level on the **Prove-It Campaign**, which calls for "an immediate moratorium on all new public wireless technologies" until they're proven safe.

The majority of her efforts over the last nine months, however, have centered on demanding a statewide ban, she said. PG&E has already installed 7.3 million of nearly 10 million new meters in California. "PG&E is just trying to put these in as fast as they can, and it's a lot harder to take them out once they're in," Kheel said. "If you cannot show that something is not going to cause irreparable harm, you don't do it. You don't take that kind of risk."

The utility has long denied any health risks posed by its meters, but recently hinted that it may consider allowing customers to opt out for medical reasons. In November, a division of the **California Public Utilities Commission** called for an investigation into the health effects of SmartMeters. Meanwhile, first-hand accounts of physiological reactions to SmartMeters, including ringing ears, fatigue, and muscle pain, have piled up as deployment has progressed.

SmartMeters are a hot-button topic, but they're not the only target for activists like Kheel. The fast year has seen a number organized campaigns against proposed cell phone towers and antennas in East Bay cities including Albany, Berkeley, Richmond, and Walnut Creek. Kheel herself, in fact, became involved when she learned that **T-Mobile** planned to install a new tower at Camp Herms, a year-round Boy Scout camp located in the hills above El Cerrito. Kheel said local opposition to the tower eventually convinced the city to withdraw its approval and begin developing a new set of siting regulations.

Elsewhere in the East Bay, however, cell-tower activists haven't been so successful. One proposed by **Verizon** for a working-class North Oakland neighborhood received approval from the city this fall — despite the fact that it will be located directly across a narrow residential street from the **North Oakland Community Charter School** and its two hundred students. **Jen Schradie**, who has a daughter and a son in the school, has been fighting the new antennas since February. She's attended city council meetings, gathered signatures and funds for an appeal, and staged protests, she said, but thanks to the neighborhood's permissive mixed-use zoning was unable to overturn the city's approval.

"There's no regulation," Schradie said. "There are no restrictions near vulnerable populations. Given the fact that we don't yet know what the health effects are, we feel that they should regulated. ... I don't want my kids to be lab rats."

Cell phones themselves have also been under fire in 2010. San Francisco earned the ire of the industry when it passed an ordinance requiring manufacturers to report the Specific Absorption Rate, a measure of radiation emission, of each new cell phone at the point of sale. The **Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association** responded by suing the city and withdrawing all future conventions.

Berkeley may be next. Just last week, its city council directed City Manager **Phil Kamlarz** to draft legislation that would emulate San Francisco's, then do it one better by requiring that radiation-related educational materials also be provided with every new phone.

As big as the electromagnetic radiation issue grew this year, more controversy is due for 2011. PG&E will wrap up the majority of its SmartMeter installations, San Francisco will begin converting its analog water meters to wireless meters, and cell phone antennas will continue to proliferate across the urban environment. Activists like Kheel and Schradie will be watching all the way. ●

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THE YEAR OF THE LOUNGE

Oakland's new nightspots incorporate a homey feel.

By Madeleine Baar

A strange thing happened to me at **The Layover** the other week. There I was, sharing the atomic patch of a dance floor with a First Friday crush, singing along to **Slick Rick**'s classic lyrics.

There lived a little boy who was misled by another little boy and this is what he said: Ooh. As regular as the beat, an object knocked at the back of my leg. Not the usual misplaced foot or overextended booty. Something hard, solid, wooden.

As he went outside and the cops was all over. I sashayed around to face the culprit, and discovered there in the middle of the floor a rocking chair. As such objects tend to be, this one was accompanied by an old man, plopped among its worn cushions, rocking.

You may not find grandma's furnishings inside every new nightspot, but rump-against-furniture collisions have become a common hazard of the local nightlife, as all the new joints in town — and there are many — have one thing in common: a little bit of everything, in just a little bit of space. Not quite sinks, they are more than just a bar.

"The thing about these cocktail lounges is, they are not intended to be destinations but they end up being destinations," said **RaeAnne Turner**, one of the owners of The Layover, whose living room aesthetic epitomizes the cozy feeling. When Turner, her husband, and two friends opened their establishment just over a year ago, they were going for a modern West Coast *Cheers* kind of a feeling. "A communal spot where you can get a cocktail, work on your laptop somewhere movement and neighborhood like."

To achieve that concept, they combed through flea markets and antique shops for an eclectic decor. Velvet purple wallpaper sets off the bar, and mismatched furniture, curtains, and vintage lamps create a look that immediately feels lived in. Inviting, ineffable. "It's this sexy, bright colored, dingy-with-the-flair-of renewal kinda like old turning into new but still old," Turner said. "Like a good house party, there's space for sitting and talking, and space for dancing and drinking. But in 1,400 square feet there's just not very much of it."

The same could be said about **Room 389**, which took over the old Golden Bear space on Grand Avenue earlier this year. Rather than the living room of an eclectic aunt like The Layover, its vibe feels like that of a homely neighbor. Bored while your friend is in the bathroom? Pick up one of the encyclopedia tomes piled under the corner lamp. Didn't use all your ice cubes? Feed them to the potted ferns on the bar. The front patio is complete with a wrought iron fence and barbecues on sunny days. All that seems to be missing from the neighborly atmosphere is a strip of Astroturf for a game of croquet.

Not all of Oakland's new lounges are so dressed down. On the other end of the spectrum is **Era Art Bar and Lounge**, with its high ceilings, oversize leather chaises, and Manhattan cool. Speaking of Manhattan, the umber and dark wood finishes at the new **Bar Three Fifty-Five** invites thirsty visitors to order a retro libation and sip slowly in the embrace of a black leather bench.

It's a risky time to open any business and nightclubs — with the added burden of various licenses and fees, as well as the propensity to be blamed for the evils of the evening — have it harder than most. Those taking that risk in Oakland are doing so in resourceful ways — in old buildings of modest sizes. "Maybe we've all been a little conservative with the space we have to work with," said Turner. Hence, the occasional rocking chair on the dance floor.

But in these otherwise uncomfortable times, a lounge can be just the right place to let go of your worries, even if you're falling in the lap of a stranger. "I think that's the nature of Oakland," Turner said. "It's a very comfortable place, as long as you have community." ■

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> You may not find grandma's furnishings inside every new nightspot, but rump-against furniture collisions have become a common hazard of the local nightlife, as all the new joints in town — and there are many — have one thing in common: a little bit of everything.

Jesse Reklaw

UNHAPPY MEDIUM

What a rotten time for East Bay sports teams to have an average year

By Kibby Kleiman

The arc of the 2010 sporting scene in the East Bay was a flatline. The **Oakland A's** proved that when they finished their season with a record of 81 wins and 81 losses. The **Golden State Warriors** hovered around the same line for much of their first quarter of play. **Cal** football played their last game of the year aspiring to be 6-6. The only reason the **Raiders** weren't even steven is that at press time they hadn't played an even number of games. Even our mayor's race failed to produce anyone who could get 50 percent of the first-place votes.

And all of this might be tolerable and in some cases *inspirational* (Raiders at .500 yo!) except for the inconvenient fact that right next door, a bridge and no area code away, was a sports season that rocked hard.

Not only will we have to live with the World Champion **San Francisco Giants** for all of 2011, but we have that long and probably longer (how many different memorial editions of the Great Event will the *Chronicle* produce?) to live with the fact that those jag-offs stole our narrative as well? Who knew that the Giants were a scrappy bunch of scrap iron? That their multi-hundred million dollar payroll masked a blue collar spirit that mocked the pretensions of the pretty boys from uh ... fuck it, let's just say the **Yankees** again.

The dead end kids from China Basin are being marketed as rag-tag guys who succeeded in overcoming by rubbing some-dirt-on-it all purpose its while neglecting the part of the story that shows them being so affluent as to sit down pitcher **Barry Zito** and his $126 million contract, and sign **Cody Ross** for $4 million in August, not because they wanted him but to keep the rival **Padres** from picking him up for themselves. Yep, nothing says true grit to A's fans more than the image of the team owner getting

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an ink smudge on his hand while writing a fat check. It was nice to have baseball in the Bay until November, but it makes it hard to remember that there was a perfect game, a quartet of stellar sophomore pitchers, and running fun from beginning to end for the 2010 Oakland A zzzzzzzzzs.

And in what sort of Bizarro world have the **San Francisco 49ers** out-hoodied the Raiders? Their quarterback controversy whipped ours in Oaktown by more than a first down marker. **Alex Smith** agonistes was way more gripping than **Jason Campbell** fumbling. **Mike Singletary's** psychological stain grabbed headlines while **Tom Cable** shared space with the **Fishing Report**. The Niners' owners and home-field issues trumped ours. When the **Coliseum** teams are second place in a two-team town, then you know that the sporting sun has left the East Bay in a deep eclipse.

Want more? **Stanford** rules the college football world. The only 510 team to win anything at all, women's professional soccer's **FC Gold Pride**, celebrated their title win by folding the franchise at season's end. Of course there were high school champions and somebody probably broke par at **Tilden Park**, but let's get real. The A's flagship radio station is literally off station after the season ended; the Raiders station, except for three hours of football a week, plays nothing but oldies (ha!), while the Warriors spend more time on **KNBR's** secondary station than erectile dysfunction ads. Meanwhile, across the bay and radio dial, they're still replaying entire Giants baseball games for the listening pleasure of people who cannot get enough hot **Nate Schierholtz** action while unwrapping their Christmas presents.

We are taught that it's the effort that matters. Is our mediocrity made the more irritating by the fact that our neighbors are riding the roller coaster while we are on the merry-go-round? Actually, it's made worse. **Vince Lombardi** once said, "If winning isn't everything, why do they keep score?" Since it doesn't look like Golden State is going to compete for a title or an All-Star or a game on national television, or that any free agents will come to play in Oakland for free, or that the Cal football team will suit up in Berkeley for two years (or the baseball team will play ever again!), or that the Raiders can't even muster up the interest to be a punch line, we suffer the worst sporting fate of all: irrelevance.

With first place come bonanzas, coaches as motivational speakers, and commemorative plaques. With last place comes draft picks, notoriety, and coaches being fired. With a mid-level finish comes silence, obscurity, and questions about whether that guy is still our coach. If we can't beat 'em (and we can't), then at least we can tie them, right? There can't be two champs or two bottom dwellers, but there can be a party at parity.

If we're going to be better than low-level sports fans of the 510, it's clear we first have to be better than C-level first. Put another way, just treading water requires effort. Here's hoping that 2011 gets us going somewhere else. ●

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Jane Rollow

WORLD OF PUNCH LINES

Comedy is the new way to diversify your hipster portfolio

By Rachel Swan

When local comedians **Moshe Kasher** and **Brent Weinbach** launched their Boomtime comedy showcase at the **Stork Club** back in 2005, they tried to pitch it as a way for every Oaklander to "diversify her hipster portfolio." Five years ago, that idea might have been premature. Today it's actually true.

More and more people are trying to launch comedy careers in the Bay Area. Scads of local comedians descend on San Francisco's **Punchline** club every Sunday for what's become an institution. Some people call it "comedy church." Nightclubs are incorporating comedy nights in their weekly programming. San Francisco media start-up **Rooftop** formed with the idea of creating a huge broadcast network for comedy.

That could actually be lucrative. Increasingly, stand-up comics have a new kind of sex appeal. They're putting out albums, getting signed to labels like **Sub Pop**, and building a cult of adoration. And musicians, such as singer **Nick Flanagan** of the Toronto band **Brutal Knights**, are venturing into comedy, too. **Jon Sih of Sideonedummy Records** has a one-man show about punk rock. Young adults are choosing comedy shows as a way of fraternizing. Cities across the country are getting awash in comedy infrastructure. These days a person might have no idea who the lead singer of **Arcade Fire** is, but he'll certainly know **Dave Chappelle** and **Jon Stewart**. And when was the last time an alternative rock band graced *Fresh Air* with **Terry Gross**?

You could hazard several guesses as to why comedians would thrive in a society that has all but forgotten its rock stars. For one thing, it's a confessional medium. And honesty is making a comeback. We're barely out of the memoir era. We love psychoanalysis. We have a thousand new ways to blog, tweet, and otherwise dish out our personal information. We're a society of TMI. Our favorite new album is *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* by **Kanye West**. Earlier this year, comedian **W. Kamau Bell** wrote a Facebook status update about a dilemma. He had something to say that was too personal to post on Facebook or Twitter. "Where do you put that?" he asked. "A diary?"

Add to that the fact that comedy is a great attention-getting tool, and it offers instant gratification. Still, it's not as easy as being a musician, according to local comedian **Chris Garcia**, who started his performing-arts career as a rock star and science educator (he led workshops at elementary schools). The rock band was a baby step. "You have a band to support you," Garcia explained. "And people automatically clap when you're done." **George Chen** agreed. He's another musician who's beginning to consolidate his career in stand-up comedy.

"I'd been threatening to do stand-up for years," Chen wrote in an e-mail. "But honestly, the format scared me. I had no idea how to write a joke." He eventually surmounted that fear. "I think seeing how you could do something without artifice or character or needing to have pure laugh quantity let me ease into doing it. And I also started in completely low-stakes environments like the backyard of **Mama Buzz**."

Comedy is also getting a lot of refugees from other parts of the oral tradition, like spoken word. Local poet-turned-comedian **Bucky Sinister** is a prime example. In spoken word, he said, people speak in a weird, contrived rhythm and make odd vocabulary choices. "I'd go to a slam and 99 people in the audience would see what was going on onstage and like it," he said. "And I'm the one asshole in back saying it's not good."

Some comics start out in theater but quickly realize that stand-up offers a quicker, better payoff. Others start as writers, but that, too, is a slower, more isolating, less sexy career path. "I've known for a while that I wanted to be a writer of some sort," said local comedian **Emily Heller**. "But I don't have the discipline for writing a book — where you have to sit at home all day. I like the constant feedback loop of stand-up, where you write short and get immediate feedback from the audience."

Then, of course, there's the Internet. It's logical that a new comedy renaissance would coincide with the age of the app. The Internet is making us a faster, sharper, wittier society. And the newer social networking sites are set up to encourage quick, abbreviated dialogue, usually in the form of quips and rejoinders. Whereas MySpace was set up around band profiles, Facebook is more conducive to comedy. The new metric of success isn't how many friends you have — it's how much you're "liked."

Most comics use the web to fuel their careers in one way or another. Many have rendered themselves into Internet performance artists. **Patton Oswalt** tests jokes out on Twitter. W. Kamau Bell does online stunts like live-tweeting an episode of *The Glenn Beck Program*. **Drennon Davis** produces short, episodic web shows, such as *Drennon's Deviant Sexual Acts*. **Will Franken** records an absurdist podcast called *Things We Did Before Reality*. Heller launched the blog *Sex Talk with Kaseem* after live-tweeting several conversations with comedian **Kaseem Bentley** — the blog's title started as a hash tag. Garcia, **Alex Koll**, **Louis Katz**, and **Sean Keane** use Facebook to promote their web series *Elevator to Space*.

The best thing about the digital age, of course, is easy access. Garcia likes to tell a story about comic **Garry Shandling**, who drove two hours just to buttonhole **George Carlin** at a gig, and show him some jokes. "He came back the next day and George Carlin had, like, total notes for him," Garcia said. Today you could do the same thing instantaneously on Facebook.

Or you could head over to the comedy church. ●

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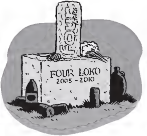

Jesse Fehrer

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF FOUR LOKO

The story of my chemical romance

By Ellen Cushing

The first time I drank **Four Loko**, I woke up the next morning with a shot glass in my pocket, electrical tape on my foot, and half a sandwich in my bed. The last time I drank Four Loko, I challenged a roomful of complete strangers to a Jell-O wrestling match. In between, I've done plenty of ill-advised things under the influence of Loko, some of which I can even remember: I've climbed trees, been ejected from bars and cons, decided that shoes were "too constrictive" and that it was a good idea to spend the better part of a night walking around barefoot — in New England, in March.

People who decide what's a trend and what's not will probably tell you that 2010 was the year of the alcoholic energy drink, and it certainly was for me. The life and death of Loko has been the singular focus of more scrutiny than nearly any other product in my memory, not to mention provoking more news stories, protests and counter-protests and general zeitgeisty chatter than like three quarters of the things Obama has done as president.

For those that've somehow missed all the Loko — a sickly sweet, super-alcoholic, highly caffeinated canned malt liquor — is better known as **Loko Blackout in a Can**, or **Liquid Cocaine** in the words of one particularly descriptive **Delaware** cop (whom I'm willing to bet has never tried one, because if he did he might realize that one is malt liquor and one is a Schedule II narcotic). It contains as much caffeine as a large cup of coffee and as much alcohol as five beers, and yet still manages to taste like nothing but Jolly Ranchers.

Loko is both nothing new and completely unprecedented. Human beings have, after all, been combining alcohol and caffeine since basically the beginning of time, in the form of Irish coffee, Jack and Coke, Red Bull and vodka, and so many others. But never has this combination been marketed so transparently to young people — theoretically the most inexperienced drinkers and the most susceptible to poor decision making — and never has a drink promised, so obviously and in such certain terms, to get you fucked up.

As someone who — believe it or not — used to get paid to teach college students how to drink responsibly, I'm well aware of the risks. In a nutshell: Stimulants trick your body into thinking you're less drunk than you are, which in turn prompts you to drink more than you might otherwise.

Loko is insidious in that it's liquor that doesn't taste, smell, look, or feel like liquor. And that's dangerous. But it's dangerous in the way that drinking anything alcoholic — or, for that matter, driving a car or living in a city or owning an oven — is dangerous, which is to say it's only dangerous if you're incredibly reckless, completely unaware of yourself and your surroundings, or extremely unlucky. I've done plenty of stupid things after drinking Four Loko, but I also once managed to hit myself in the face with a bowling ball while completely sober, so you never know.

Like John Lennon, or Polaroid film, or Cody's Books, dying was, in a backwards way, the best thing that ever happened to Four Loko. Crackdowns, first on the state level and now at the federal level, have turned what was once just another relatively nasty-tasting alcoholic beverage into something much more. The Loko ban has inspired countless **Facebook** groups and more than a few **YouTube** videos and songs; a rally and vigil last month in New York City's Union Square apparently drew hundreds of people. Loko has come to embody a specific moment in time the way I imagine 40s did for the generation before mine: turned somehow into a folksy symbol of rebellion for a generation and a demographic that are often derided for not caring about anything. In this sense, it's the ultimate hipster cause, because it's not really about a cause other than getting drunk.

I first got into Loko the way I imagine most people do — in college, when anything involving alcohol seems like a really good idea. It started as sort of a hipster joke, and quickly ripened into something realer and deeper as my friends and I came to understand just how awesome it is to be both incredibly drunk and completely wide awake at the same time. Loko is one-stop shopping, and I'm a gal on the go.

When Loko was banned, I promptly bought out my local liquor store. My stockpile is slowly being whittled down, and soon I'll be left with only the Blue Raspberry flavor: desperate times, indeed. I know some time sooner or later I'll finally be done, and I'm starting to become okay with that. Loved and lost and all that. In the meantime, I'm appreciating the little things: the oddly camouflaged packaging, the cloying and subtly aluminum smell, the quaint little "we ID" despite the fact that a) an aluminum can can't do much of anything, and b) if whoever "they" are did ID, we probably wouldn't be in quite this mess now. I'm trying to relish for the last time the particular sense of invincibility that comes with having in my hand a can the size of my forearm filled with three different stimulants: 12 percent ABV malt liquor and, of course, Red #40.

Loko, we hardly knew ye. ●

To share this story, go to: ebx.ly/fourloko

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[illegible]

CLOSED FOR BUSINESS

2010 was the Year of the Furlough as public agencies shut their doors to cope with the Great Recession

By Robert Gammon

Before the foreclosure crisis and the meltdown on **Wall Street**, few people worried about public employee compensation, benefits and pension plans. But when the **Great Recession** tightened its grip on the American economy and tax revenues shrank, government pay packages suddenly became unsustainable, forcing the issue to the forefront of local and state politics. At first, public agencies responded with widespread layoffs. But when government services were cut to the bone, cities, counties, and the state turned instead to worker furloughs — a solution that forced the shutdown of government for days and even weeks in 2010.

The State of California closed for business on a whopping 26 days this year. Locally, **UC Berkeley** furloughed its staffers from 11 to 26 days, depending on job classification and pay grade. And Oakland city government has shut its doors for nine days so far, but the city plans to close down for three more next week, bringing the year's total to twelve.

Mayor-elect **Jean Quan** said in an interview to expect a similar scenario in 2011. "We're trying to keep the same number of furlough days for next year," said Quan, who plans to release her proposed 2011-12 budget in late March. "But we may have to raise the number of days slightly."

There's no doubt that furloughs and government shutdowns inconvenience taxpayers. It's a hassle to show up at the DMV or local library, or the city planning office to find that it's closed for business on a regular weekday. But with record unemployment and taxpayers still struggling to pay their bills, voters are unlikely to approve tax increases that would put an end to the furloughs anytime soon.

As a result, government leaders face a quandary. Nearly all public employees belong to unions, and so their compensation packages are protected by collective bargaining agreements. That means political leaders have no legal right to just start slashing workers' pay or benefits. And if unions refuse pay cuts, most public agencies are basically left with two choices — layoffs or furloughs.

But after the City of Oakland slashed hundreds of jobs and unions agreed to compensation cuts in 2008 and 2009, city officials realized that additional layoffs would have severely threatened the city's ability to provide basic services. During union negotiations, city leaders also discovered that employee unions preferred furloughs as way to save on government expenses. "The virtue of furloughs compared to a 5 percent salary cut is that at least employees get something for it — they get twelve days off and a hell of lot of three-day weekends," explained Oakland City Administrator **Dan Lindheim**.

> There's no doubt that furloughs and government shutdowns inconvenience taxpayers. But voters are unlikely to approve tax increases that would put an end to the furloughs anytime soon.

But Lindheim noted that furloughs are not a panacea for city governments in tough economic times. The reason is that it usually makes no economic sense to furlough the two most costly public employee unions — police officers and firefighters. Public safety demands that police and firefighting shifts get covered, so if you put a cop or firefighter on furlough, you'll likely have to pay another one overtime as a replacement.

However, during heated negotiations over the past few years, some public employee unions grew angry when they learned that cops and firefighters were exempt from furloughs. Lindheim said that while he understood their complaints, Oakland never seriously considered furloughing its public safety employees. "The purpose of a furlough is save the city money," Lindheim noted. "So I'm not going to do something for the sake of egalitarianism that will end up costing the city money."

Still, because cops and firefighters make up more than 65 percent of Oakland's general fund budget, the city had to get concessions from those unions — especially police because of its high costs — to make up for the loss of nearly $100 million in tax revenues over the last several years. With furloughs off the table, the choice was between compensation cuts and layoffs. Firefighters had already agreed to contribute 13 percent to their own pensions, but when the police union refused to start paying 9 percent to theirs without a no-layoff guarantee, the city council responded by laying off eighty officers in July.

But what about taxpayers? Furloughs and shutdowns, after all, mean that governments can't provide decent customer service to residents — the people who pay the bills.

For governments, though, the alternatives to furloughs are pay cuts or layoffs. And if employee unions resist compensation concessions, public agencies are forced to lay off more workers, which can lead to even less desirable outcomes than furloughs. With too many layoffs, City Hall may remain open, but there'll be no one there to serve you. And if lots of librarians and park workers are laid off, then the city might have to close those facilities permanently — not just twelve days a year.

Still, not every public employee union will agree to furloughs. Recently, **AFSCME Local 3299, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees** union, refused to agree to furloughs at UC Berkeley. The local represents blue-collar workers on campus. "Our position is that we didn't have a problem talking about furloughs if we could get a guarantee of no layoffs," explained AFSCME Local 3299 President **Lakesha Harrison**. But campus officials wouldn't go along with the no-layoff demand, and decided instead to impose furloughs, calling them "temporary layoffs," in order to circumvent the collective bargaining agreement.

Sharon Cornu, head of the **Alameda County Labor Council**, said it's up to individual unions to decide whether they prefer layoffs, furloughs, or compensation cuts when governments are forced to reduce spending. But she argued that at some point government workers won't be able to afford to keep being the victims of Wall Street's greed — nor should they have to. "To force retired firefighters, retired teachers, and retired nurses to keep paying is foolish," she contended.

On a statewide level, Governor-elect **Jerry Brown** faces a thorny problem over furloughs as well. Public-employee unions fed up with furloughs, layoffs and compensation cuts helped him defeat **Meg Whitman**. These same unions also had sued Governor **Arnold Schwarzenegger** over his furlough plan. And Brown's campaign slammed furloughs as "a temporary solution to a permanent problem."

But Brown is now facing a projected $25 billion budget deficit over the next year and a half. In other words, he may have no choice but to continue furloughs. After all, he's already warned educators to prepare for substantial cuts to public school funding. So he's going to slash money for kids but agree to protect state workers from furloughs?

In short, 2010 may have been the Year of the Furlough, but 2011 may be no different. Government looks like it will be closed for business again next year. Better get used to it. ●

To share this story, go to: ebx.hypr/furloughs

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The Coup performs at the New Parish.

What to Do This New Year's Eve

Our critics weigh in on the best options for nerds burners, jazzheads, slackers, consumers of PBR, and underage partygoers

By Nate Seltenrich, Ellen Cushing, and Rachel Swan

The Coup

Emma Goldman famously — and apocryphally — declared that if she couldn't dance she didn't want to be part of your revolution. More than half a century later, **Boots Riley** and **Pam the Funkstress** come along and make doing both look easy. It's been four years since they came out with an album, but we're willing to bet they can still hold it down. See for yourself when they're joined by frequent collaborator **Lyrics Born**. (E.C.)

Details: At the New Parish (579 18th St., Oakland) 9:30 p.m. $40-$50.

Go if: You prefer your polemics with a backbone and a beat.

What to wear: An A's cap and some aviators.

Hipster quotient: 3/5

Inebriation: 4/5

Meat market: 4/5

The Slackers

Stylish as they may still be, forget your checkerboard Vans. Such nostalgic trappings only obscure the fact that ska lives and breathes. Contemporary acts serve tight-knit communities of self-identified young misfits across the country, with New York's **The Slackers** leading the way. Expect more skanking than drinking at what is sure to be a festive, if sweaty, evening of traditional ska for 2011. (N.S.)

Details: At the Great American Music Hall (859 O'Farrell St., San Francisco) with Boss 501. 9 p.m. $35.

Belt alternative of choice: Suspenders.

Beware of: Acne.

Hipster quotient: 3/5

Inebriation: 1/5

Meat market: 2/5

Dresden Dolls

Any band that has been known to employ stiltwalkers, fire-breathers, and other cabaret-style pyrotechnics in its much-loved live show is an automatic perfect fit for an evening as steeped in excess as New Year's Eve. The self-described "Brechtian punk" duo will also be joined onstage by up-and-coming indie rockers **Pomplamoose**, as well as what are being sold as "very special mystery guests." (E.C.)

Details: At the Warfield (982 Market St., San Francisco) 9 p.m., $32.25-$47.25.

What to wear: Your finest can-can dress or top hat, a pair of thigh highs, and a face ful of mime makeup.

Beware of: The aforementioned fire-breathers.

Hipster quotient: 3/5

Inebriation: 3/5

Meat Market: 2/5

Flight Night — Kain$San

There apparently weren't enough grain-cents dollar signs in underground hip-hop until six local emcees took it upon themselves to rectify the situation. The members of Kain$San are medallion-wearing, cocaine-snorting, stealth-operating, luxurious playboys. They combine the allure of Seventies British spy films with the decadent lifestyle touted by commercial hip-hop. (R.S.)

Details: At Shattuck Down Low (2284 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley) 9 p.m. $5-$20.

Drink of choice: Cuba Libre.

Beware of: Pickup lines beginning with the phrase "Girl, you so fine you make me want to get a job."

Hipster quotient: 3/5

Inebriation: 4/5

Meat market: 5/5

Furthur

Furthur isn't getting any younger. Yet by the looks of its headlining performance at this summer's **Outside Lands Festival**, that doesn't mean a thing. **Phil Lesh** and **Bob Weir** of the **Grateful Dead**, both four-and-a-half decades deep into jam bandery, prove age is just a number by leading Furthur through rollicking sets on stages from coast to coast. (N.S.)

Details: At the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium (99 Grove St., San Francisco) 7:30 p.m. $65.

Rolling paper of choice: Whatever you get.

Beware of: Dancers.

Hipster quotient: 1/5

Inebriation: 3/5

Meat market: 3/5

Not Your Normal New Year's Eve

Brent Weinbach and **Moshe Kasher** built their careers with jokes about male fragility and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Now they're two of the best absurdist comedians in the biz. This year they've teamed up with **Drennon Davis**, whose artistic ventures include the web series "Drennon's Deviant Sexual Acts" and "Messiah High." (Think: Jesus goes to high school.) "Burlesque granny" **Lynn Ruth Miller** also performs, along with host **Jill Bourque**. (R.S.)

Details: At Herbst Theatre (401 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco) 8 p.m. $25-$29.

TV character you'll most likely see there: Vicky the Robot from *Small Wonder*.

Beware of: "Stink eye."

Hipster quotient: 4/5

Inebriation: 2/5

Meat market: 3/5

Los Rakas

Truly a band for our time, **Los Rakas** is the aural equivalent of globalization, of boundaries being crossed and smudged, of rampant multiculturalism. The Oakland-based bilingual Panamanian duo blending hip-hop, reggae, and dancehall is thus embraced by dancers and rappers and post-modernists and hipsters and anyone else appreciating artful juxtaposition and urban beats and rhymes. Throw in a few cocktails and that's one hell of a New Year's Eve show. (N.S.)

Details: At Club Six (60 6th St., San Francisco). 8 p.m. $20.

Bird tattoo of choice: Quetzal.

Beware of: Bathroom hookups.

Hipster quotient: 4/5

Inebriation: 4/5

Meat market: 4/5

924 Gilman 24th Anniversary

The West Berkeley mainstay famous for helping kickstart the careers of **AFI**, **Green Day**, and **Rancid** is now three years legal, even if none of its patrons are. To celebrate 24 years of raising all-ages hell, the club will host a two-day anniversary celebration featuring street punks **Monster Squad**, gloom-and-doomers **In Desperation**, SoCal hardcore/thrash outfit **Media Blitz**, pop punkers **Chump Change**, and Oakland's own **Short Attn. Span** on New Year's Eve, and a slew of others the following day. (E.C.)

Details: At 924 Gilman (924 Gilman St., Berkeley) 7 p.m. $5.

Go if: You're underage.

Beware of: Unruly elbows.

Hipster quotient: 2/5

Inebriation: 0/5

Meat market: 2/5

Ray Band & 8 Legged Monster

Mike Irwin Johnson is a serial launcher-of-projects. His aptly named swing band **8 Legged Monster** started with four horns and a four-member rhythm section and gradually accumulated more personnel. Meanwhile, he set his sights on a more ambitious project: a fifteen-person ensemble to play the music of **Ray Charles**. The **Ray Band** also features three female singers — **Allegra Bandy**, **Karen Fremont**, and **Rashida Calendening** — who model themselves after Charles' original **Raelettes**. (R.S.)

Details: At Coda (1710 Mission St., San Francisco) 6 & 8:30 p.m., $25-$27.

What to drink: Sidecar martini or a sloe gin fizz.

Beware of: Anything "breezy."

Hipster quotient: 3/5

Inebriation: 3/5

Meat market: 4/5

Lalah Hathaway

Not all musical dynasties fall in a perfect line of succession. But the Hathaways are solid. Lalah has as much soul and emotional heft as her father Donny, who sang every tune as though it were a spiritual. She plays with a top-notch band to boot, with local favorite **Michael Aaberg** on keys. (R.S.)

Details: At Yoshi's (510 Embarcadero, Oakland) 8 & 11 p.m., $50-$100.

Drink of choice: Ginjo Sake.

What to wear: Think "tuxedo gala."

Hipster quotient: 1/5

Inebriation: 2/5

Meat market: 2/5

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NEW YEAR'S EVE & DAY

COMEDY

[illegible] Johnson Fri., Dec. 31, 7:30 p.m. $30-$40. Tommy T's Comedy Steakhouse, 5104 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton. 925-227-1800. Tommyts.com.

[illegible] "Not Your [illegible] New Year's Eve" featuring Brent Weinbach, [illegible] Kasher, Desiree Burch, and Lynn Ruth Miller. Fri., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $25-$50. Verdi Club Theatre, 408 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco. 415-397-4400.

Big Fat Year End Kiss-Off Comedy Gnus with Will Durst and Friends Also featuring Mary Magdalene, Michael Pritchard, Debi Durst, and Arthur Gaus. Fri., Dec. 31, 7 & 10 p.m. $25-$35. [illegible] Works, 2513 Blanding Ave., Alameda. 510-815-5860. [illegible]

Paul Mooney VIP packages include champagne ($65 w/ champagne, dinner, autographs, and pictures). Fri., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $65 [illegible] $50-$130 VIP. Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 2025 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-647-2949.

CULINARY & WINE

New Year's Eve Dinner at Dover Prix-fixe dinner, with a sparkling wine drink and music by DJ [illegible]. Fri., Dec. 31, 5:30 p.m. $65. Dover [illegible], 2201 Broadway, Oakland.

New Year's Eve 2010 at Chop Bar With a family-style dinner, drink specials, a New Year's toast, and music. Fri., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $75. Chop Bar, 247 4th St., Oakland. 510-834-2467. Chopbar.com.

New Year's Eve Dinner at Gather Four-course prix-fixe menu with vegan and vegetarian options. Fri., Dec. 31, 5:30 p.m. [illegible] Gather, 2200 Oxford St., Berkeley. 510-809-0400. Gatherrestaurant.com.

New Year's Eve Dinner at Pakali Dances Five-course prix-fixe dinner, including sparkling wine and live music. Fri., Dec. 31, 5 p.m. $55. Pakali Cafe, 7229 Mountain Blvd., Oakland. 510-482-8094.

New Year's Eve Dinner at Zut! Four-course prix-fixe menu, free champagne, live music, and dancing, with early ($75) and late ($80) seating, plus optional wine pairing ($30). Fri., Dec. 31, 5:30 p.m. $75-$120. Zut!, 1820 Fourth St., Berkeley. 510-644-0444. Zutonfourth.com.

New Year's Eve "Murder at the Masquerade" [illegible] Mystery Dinner Interactive show and game, with a three-course dinner and sparkling wine. Reservations required. Fri., Dec. 31, 6 p.m. $75. Lake Chalet, 1520 Lakeside Dr., Oakland. 510-208-5253. TheLakeChalet.com.

KIDS

New Year's Eve [illegible] Drop With prizes. Fri., Dec. 31, 11:45 a.m. $12.95 & 3:45 p.m. $4 per child plus museum admission. Chabot Space & Science Center, 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland. 510-336-7373. ChabotSpace.org.

LITERARY EVENTS

Pegasus's Biggest Calendar Sale With hundreds of calendars in various [illegible] of various themes for sale. $3.99 each or three for $10. Sat., Jan. 1, 10 a.m. Pegasus Books, 1855 Solano Avenue, Berkeley. 510-525-6888.

SOCIAL EVENTS

The New Year's Eve Ball at the Rock Fundraiser for Pleasanton-area children's [illegible] with live music, a DJ, [illegible], no-host bars, and a champagne toast. Visit TheNYEAtTheMall.org to buy tickets. Fri., Dec. 31, 8 p.m.–1 a.m. $75-$100. Stoneridge Mall, Pleasanton. Shop Stoneridge.com.

New Year's Day [illegible] Mad [illegible] Island Party With DJ Babygirl spinning

Residents only. All ages; no one under 13 admitted without an adult. Sat., Jan. 1, 8-11 p.m. Residents $10-$15; [illegible] $8-$10. Alameda [illegible] Sports Center and Skating Rink, 1202 Sunset Blvd. [illegible]

New Year's Eve Celebration [illegible] Festive attire encouraged. Fri., Dec. 31, 6 p.m. $25. Masquers Playhouse, 105 Park Pl., Richmond. 510-232-4031. Masquers.org.

New Year's Eve Singles Party With a ballroom, a DJ, a live band, [illegible], party favors, a balloon drop, prizes, and more. Berkeley also welcome. See [illegible] for details. Fri., Dec. 31, 8:30 p.m. $81 in advance; $75 at the door. Concord Hilton, 1970 Diamond Blvd., Concord. 925-827-2000.

Pearl Pearls Dance and Gold Ball With spoken word and slam poetry, music, [illegible], a champagne toast, and food and drink for sale. Performances by Ayodele Nzinga [illegible] and more. Fri., Dec. 31, 7:30 p.m. $20. Eastside Cultural Center, 2277 International Blvd., Oakland. 510-533-6629.

Ring in the New Year with Pinball With a toast, door prizes, finger food, a no-host bar, and 90 pinball machines. [illegible] Fri., Dec. 31, 8 p.m.-2 a.m. $25. Pacific Pinball Museum, 1510 Webster St., Alameda. 510-205-6959. PacificPinball.org.

"Tiki-Lypso" New Year's Eve Party With a VIP party (8 p.m.-9 p.m., $80) featuring host [illegible] and live calypso music, after which the party will be [illegible] ($100) for more calypso, as well as food and champagne toast. Fri., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $10-$50. Forbidden Island, 1304 Lincoln Ave., Alameda. 510-749-0332. ForbiddenIslandAlameda.com.

USS Hornet New Year's Eve [illegible] Party With live swing and jazz music, dancing, and a silent auction to benefit the Hornet's [illegible] programs. Fri., Dec. 31, 7:30 p.m. $45-$85. USS Hornet Museum, 707 W. Hornet Ave., Alameda. 510-521-8448.

SPORTS & OUTDOORS-PARTICIPATORY

Polar Bear Plunge Ring in the new year with a swim at the Outdoors' [illegible] with contests and prizes. Sat., Jan. 1, noon. $25 in advance; $27 day of. Stoneridge Hill Aquatic Park, 147 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. 925-682-0896. PleasantHillRec.com.

MUSIC

2010 New Year's Eve w/ the Dangerous Dan, Sleep (New Wave City), [illegible] & Mark Andrus. Fri., Dec. 31, 10 p.m. The Mighty, 119 Utah St., San Francisco. 415-762-7151. MightySF.com.

An Evening w/ Furthur Featuring Phil Lesh & Bob Weir Fri., Dec. 31, 7:30 p.m. $65 sold out. Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, 99 Grove St., San Francisco. 415-478-2277. BillGrahamCivic.com.

Bimbo NYE 2011 w/ Sarah-Jo [illegible], Adam & Mysterious D, [illegible], Grandpeople, & Jeffrey Paradise. Fri., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $25-$40. Mezzanine, 444 Jessie St., San Francisco. 415-625-8880. MezzanineSF.com.

Cockblock New Year's Eve 2011 w/ [illegible], DJ Chase G., [illegible] & The Geysha. Fri., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $20. Rickshaw Stop, 155 Fell St., San Francisco. 415-861-2011. RickshawStop.com.

DJ Jerry Ross spinning soul, funk, hip-hop, R&B, & more. Thursdays, 10 p.m. Easy Lounge, 3255 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland. 510-338-4841. EasySF.com.

[illegible] Stacked Col. & [illegible] Presents New Year's Eve [illegible] 2011 Fri., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. Blakes on Telegraph, 2367 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-848-0886. BlakesOnTelegraph.com.

Johnnie Dub w/ [illegible]. Fri., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $32.25-$47.25. The Warfield, 982 Market St., San Francisco. 415-775-7722.

Indie/Dub Fever & New Year's Eve [illegible] w/ B-Side Players, [illegible] & The [illegible], LoCura, La Gente, [illegible] Cohen Presents the Congress plus Jimmy Love & [illegible] of New State Bhangra. Fri., Dec. 31, 8 p.m., $30. Westin Bay Commerce Center, 1290 Fremont St., San Francisco.

Flight NYE w/ [illegible] w/ DJ G Bob, [illegible] Double Bagatoo, DJ [illegible] & Kyle Rothstein. Fri., Dec. 31, 9 p.m., $6-$20. Shattuck Down Low, 2284 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-548-1159. ShattuckDownLow.com.

Guatemalan Center Warrior. Fri., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. [illegible] Newlook Towers, 1138 Polk St., San Francisco. 415-923-0023. [illegible]

Grass [illegible] Oakland w/ Da Cotar Nation [illegible], Maya Vida, Grass [illegible]. Fri., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. [illegible] 2549 San Pablo Ave., Oakland. MySpace.com/[illegible]

High on Fire New Year's Eve Show Fri., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $20. The New Parish, 579 18th St., Oakland. TheNewParish.com.

Island Style New Year's Eve 2011 w/ Natural Vibrations & [illegible], It's Very Rad & Anew. Fri., Dec. 31, 9 p.m., $29-$37. [illegible], 406 Clement St., San Francisco. 415-387-6344. [illegible].com.

Lavay Smith & Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers w/ [illegible] Royale, Mr. Lucky & The [illegible] Party featuring Ralph Carney, & special appearances by The Girl in the Fishbowl. Fri., Dec. 31, 8 p.m., $50. Bimbo's 365 Club, 1025 Columbus Ave., San Francisco. 415-474-0365. Bimbos365Club.com.

[illegible] Squad w/ Media Blitz, [illegible], Chump Change & Short Attn. Span. Fri., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $7. 924 Gilman St., Berkeley. 510-525-9926. 924Gilman.org.

New Year's Eve [illegible] w/ Foreign [illegible] w/ Floating [illegible]. Fri., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. Starry Plough, 3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-2082. StarryPloughPub.com.

New Year's Eve [illegible] Bash w/ High Country, Bruce & [illegible] Nutally. Fri., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $19.50-$20.50. Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 2020 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-644-2020. TheFreight.org.

New Year's Eve Celebration w/ The Coup: w/ [illegible] & the Apollo [illegible]. Fri., Dec. 31, 9:30 p.m. $40. The New Parish, 579 18th St., Oakland. TheNewParish.com.

New Year's Celebration w/ [illegible] Dec. 30-Fri. [illegible] 1330 Fillmore St., San Francisco. [illegible]

New Year's Eve [illegible] w/ Lakal Hathaway Fri., Dec. 31, 8 & 10 p.m. Sat., Jan. 1, 8 & 10 p.m. [illegible] Yoshi's, 510 Embarcadero West, Oakland. 510-238-9200. Yoshis.com.

New Year's Eve Countdown 2011 w/ [illegible], Mr. E. Sallah, DJ [illegible], Jah Warrior Shelter, [illegible] & Daddy Rafe. Fri., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. [illegible], 60 6th St., San Francisco. 415-863-1221. Club6sf.com.

New Year's Eve Featuring [illegible] & [illegible] Fri., Dec. 31, 8 & 8:30 p.m. $25-$50. [illegible] 1710 Mission St., San Francisco. 415-558-[illegible]

New Year's Eve w/ [illegible] Fri., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $30. Jupiter, 2181 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-843-8277. JupiterBeer.com.

New Year's w/ Primus: performing Sailing the Seas of Cheese w/ The Residents & Les Claypool's Fancy Brigade w/ The Mark Kenny Co. Wed.-Fri., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $42.50-$65. Fox Theater, 1807 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. TheFoxOakland.com.

New Year's Eve w/ [illegible] Brass Band w/ New Orleans [illegible] Allstars. Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $45. The Independent, 628 Divisadero St., San Francisco. 415-771-1421. IndependentSF.com.

New Year's Eve w/ The Stanleys: w/ [illegible]. Fri., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. $35. Great American Music Hall, 859 O'Farrell St., San Francisco. 415-885-0750. [illegible]

New [illegible] Eve w/ [illegible] w/ Big Light. Fri., Dec. 31, 9:30 p.m. $40. Cafe du Nord, 2170 Market St., San Francisco. 415-861-5016. CafeduNord.com.

New Year's Eve Zydeco Dance Party w/ Andre Thierry & Zydeco Magic Fri., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $45. Kaplin Hall, 2016 Johnson Ave., Alameda. 415-285-8280. SFZydeco.com.

Streets of San Francisco New Year's Eve 2011 w/ [illegible] [illegible] Auburn [illegible] Just & [illegible]. Fri., Dec. 31, 9 p.m. $50-$200. Fort Mason, Marina Blvd. and Buchanan St., San Francisco. 415-345-7575. FortMason.org.

Uptown/[illegible] New Year's Eve Bash w/ [illegible] & variety acts, plus The Hi-Rhythm Hustlers. Fri., Dec. 31, 6 p.m. $15. The Uptown, 1928 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-451-8100. UptownNightclub.com.

ARTS CULTURE

Skaters at Bordertown

Ken Fagel ara

CULTURE SPY

BORDERTOWN ON THIN ICE

Skaters try to stave off demolition of a beloved DIY skate park

By Rachel Swan

Skateboard wheels grind down a wooden half pipe at all hours of the day in **Josh Matlock**'s living room. He lives in a North Oakland warehouse with four other guys and a rotating cast of squatters. There's a large loft, a common area with video game consoles, and a patio outside with an awning made of corrugated plastic. On a recent Saturday morning, the smell of scrambled eggs and ketchup wafted from the kitchen. Matlock was cooking breakfast and making Bloody Mary cocktails. **Minutemen** songs blasted from the living room stereo.

The skaters were gearing up for a house party and show that afternoon. They'd ordered a keg and planned to solicit donations at the door. Proceeds would benefit **Bordertown Skate Park**, a large concrete bowl they built beneath a 580 freeway overpass at 34th and Louise streets in Emeryville. They had leased the property from Caltrans — by way of the City of Oakland — for five years, but when their lease expired in September, Caltrans started issuing trespassing tickets. Five years since the original battle for Bordertown, the skaters were back in a deadlock, trying to stave off the park's demolition.

When Matlock discovered the Bordertown site in the summer of 2004, it was a dumping ground and hangout for drug addicts. With the help of two friends, **Justin Demmon** and **Tony Miorana**, he amassed a small army to clean it up. "We were thirty deep, all kids with backpacks," Matlock said. They filled giant trash bags with detritus. Then Matlock bought a concrete mixer and pallets from a lumberyard where he worked. The skaters dug out the ground and burned trash at night, mixed concrete on Sundays, and kept a rigorous schedule. The kids hand mixed their own cement by running a hose fifty feet from an unused water outlet on Louise. They also gathered water from puddles. "We'd just get buckets and recycle everything," Matlock said. "You know, keep it green."

Within months, they'd built a large amoeba-shaped bowl right into the pillars that connect I-580 to the ground. Skaters came at all hours of the day and night, ollieing on the rim of the structure as cars whooshed overhead. They made peace with the homeless people who lived there. They endeared themselves to some of the local business owners, who said that crime decreased in that neighborhood after the skateboarders cleaned it up.

A year passed before Caltrans got wind of the park, and by then it was well known in the skate community. Transportation authorities immediately threatened to shut the place down. But against all odds, the Bordertown gang marshaled a surprising amount of support from Oakland city officials. They encouraged TV news stations and local publications (including this one) to cover the story. They elicited sympathy from city councilman **Ignacio De La Fuente** and Senator **Barbara Boxer**, who wrote a heartfelt letter to Caltrans District 4 director **Bijan Sartipi**. She championed the skate park as a clean, wholesome, recreational site in a neighborhood with scant activities for youth.

Lobbying powers aside, the skaters were absolutely determined to make their park legit. They persuaded the city to lease the property from Caltrans for five years and sublease it to the Bordertown nonprofit they formed at no cost. In the meantime, Matlock, Miorana, and company invested $3,000 for a building permit and $700 for zoning. They paid an engineer $14,000 to draw blueprints — which are now tacked to their living room wall — and bring everything up to code. They got the soil tested for toxins and monitored the thickness and compaction of the concrete. "We laid everything out so Caltrans understood what we're doing," Miorana said. Then they threw in $2,500 for a $25 million liability insurance policy. Matlock financed some of it using his personal coffers, and from contributions by friends and random donations. They stand to lose a sizable investment if the park gets shut down. That's still nothing compared to the sweat equity that went into Bordertown.

But now the stakes are higher and the future looks grim. Caltrans didn't return calls before press time, but the skaters speculate that the agency wants to shut down Bordertown for trespassing and building without permission. Meanwhile, Miorana says "the city backed out." Ignacio De La Fuente's office is no longer returning e-mails about the park, Matlock said. The skaters no longer have a bulwark behind them.

Undeterred, a group of skateboarders hopped the fence at Bordertown last week and got busted by Caltrans authorities. Everyone got tickets. The site has always been fenced in, but now it's desolate. Piles of trash and broken glass are accumulating below a twelve foot fence on the south end. It bears a sign with the words "State property. No parking. No dumping. No trespassing. Violators will be prosecuted."

In her letter to Sartipi, Boxer hoped for "a constructive resolution of this important matter without undue delay or red tape." Recalling that line, Miorana smirked. "It's just been red tape the whole entire time," he said.

With a fence in place and Caltrans refusing to budge, the future of Bordertown looks dicey. So the skaters began shifting their focus to other, more promising enterprises. In the last four years, Matlock and Miorana managed to parlay the success of Bordertown into paid gigs: they now build skate parks for a company called **Grindline**. Meanwhile, they've continued guerilla operations. In the spring of 2007 the Bordertown posse built another park at the Albany Bulb using rocks, sand, and construction debris that they gathered on the beach. That got torn down in 2008. Last year they found a new site on Wood Street in West Oakland, just blocks away from Bordertown. They quickly staked claim on the place, building cement "volcanoes" with rainbow-arch rails on top. A lot of the materials were scavenged from parks they built in other cities. They named it "The Spot."

The Spot is secluded, right off a dead-end street that's crisscrossed with railroad tracks. Freeway arteries corkscrew overhead. One pillar bears a "State Property" sign exactly like the one at Bordertown. Others bear graffiti. An elaborate skull-and-headdress drawing lies several feet behind a huge heart, with the initials "R and D" etched in. Nearby is a warning, inscribed in light blue lettering: "Respect the Spot."

Apparently, it's been effective. For the time being, at least. ●

To share this story, type: ebx.sy/bordertown

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EVENTS & ATTRACTIONS

The Suburbs' New Scene

Real Stories brings live storytelling to Walnut Creek

Kay DeMartini

In the urban East Bay, Walnut Creek is known for a few things — including high-end shopping, great public schools, and its suburban idyll — but despite the Lesher Center for the Arts and a handful of smaller galleries, theaters, and venues, it's not often considered an epicenter of up-and-coming arts and culture. Once a month since April, however, resident **Kay DeMartini** has been working to change that. Her **Real Stories** series brings professional and amateur comedians and writers from all over the Bay Area to **1515 Restaurant and Bar** (1515 N. Main St., Walnut Creek) for a series of ten-minute stories, all organized around a central theme. It's dynamic, original — even hip — entertainment in a part of the East Bay often dismissed as little more than a mall.

It's also part of what looks like a larger trend toward storytelling as entertainment for adults. NPR's *This American Life* is now the most popular podcast in the nation, and in recent years, live storytelling events like New York's The Moth and San Francisco's Porchlight have proliferated nationwide. DeMartini suspects that this recent enthusiasm for long-form, live storytelling is attributable to what may be the beginnings of a backlash against stand-up comedy. "It's expensive, it can be so unpredictable," she said. "When it's good, it's great, but it can be terrible." That's part of what drew DeMartini herself away from the stand-up world and into storytelling, and she thinks it's what makes Real Stories compelling. It's narrative, but more casual and considerably cheaper than theater; and funny, but more organic and less forced than stand-up.

Past shows have focused on themes as varied and broadly interpretable as "family matters," "kitchen confidential," and "judgment call," and have featured storytellers including an ex-con, a transgendered comedian, a professional baseball player-turned-fisherman, a bikini-waxer, and a butt model.

This month's show, on Wednesday, December 29, tackles "gifts" — good and bad, literal and metaphorical, god-given and man-made — as its theme, with what DeMartini calls a "well-rounded" set of ten minute-long stories. Performers will include KFOG personality **Peter Finch**, San Francisco playwright **Carolyn Doyle**, Orinda-based storyteller **Chris Holton**, and stand-up comic **Chris Judd**, as well as two audience members who'll enter their names into a hat. (DeMartini isn't planning on performing, but if someone backs out, she'll discuss what she foreboding referred to as "The Chia Pet disaster.")

Thus far, DeMartini has drawn about 45 people per show — respectable by any standard — but the show, which primarily attracts Walnut Creek residents and Lamorindans in their thirties and forties, isn't immune to the particular vicissitudes of suburban family life: "If there's a spelling test on Thursday," she said of her Wednesday evening show, "I know I can count on a much emptier room." 7:30-9:15 p.m., $10-$15. BrownPaperTickets.com/event/137898

— *Ellen Cushing*

To share this story, type: ebx.ly/[illegible]

Editor's Note: Because of the holiday, we highly recommend that you call to confirm events before leaving the house.

ATTRACTIONS

[illegible] St. Nick will be available for photos in the Bayfair Mall's Center Court. Through Dec. 24. [illegible] Bayfair Center, 15555 E. 14th St., San Leandro. 510-357-0000, ShopBayfair.com.

FAIRS, FESTIVALS & FIESTAS

[illegible] Holiday Celebration Visit the tent on the corner of Webster St. and Pacific Ave. for various holiday-themed activities and events for Oakland and [illegible]. Through Dec. 26. free. Oakland St. and Pacific Ave., Oakland St. and Pacific Ave., Alameda.

KIDS

[illegible] Club Anime discussion group for teens. Second and Fourth Tuesday of every month, 5-6:30 p.m. free. Oakland Public Library, Rockridge Branch, 5366 College Ave., Oakland. 510-597-5017, OaklandLibrary.org.

Zanzibar Puppets: Cinderella Production of the classic fairy tale, featuring 20 puppets. Saturdays, Sundays, 2 & 4 p.m. Continues through Dec. 26. $12. Uptown Body & Fender, 401 26th St., Oakland. 510-251-8000.

Fairy Winterland Fairyland's Seasonal holiday festival, featuring puppet books and storytelling, a special each day @ 5:30 p.m., live music, holiday-themed arts and crafts, and a daily visit from Santa Claus, in addition to the park's standard offerings. Through Dec. 23. $4-$6. Children's Fairyland, 699 Bellevue Ave. (at Lake Merritt), Oakland. 510-452-2259, Fairyland.org.

Holiday Sing-Along Seasonal song sing-along for kids and their parents. Wed., Dec. 22, 3:30 p.m. free. Oakland Main Library, 125 14th St., Oakland.

Kids' Book Group A new reading group for children who love books. Last Sunday of every month, 11 a.m.-noon. free. Diesel, 5433 College Ave., Oakland. 510-653-9965, DieselBookstore.com.

[illegible] for Kids Beginning session @ Indian classical dance. Saturdays, 9:30-10:30 a.m. [illegible] College of Indian Classical Arts, 1531 Tacoma St., Berkeley. 510-[illegible]-2447. [illegible]

[illegible] With snacks and holiday festivities. Wed., Dec. 22, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. free. [illegible] Community Center, San Pablo Park, 2800 Park St., Berkeley. 510-981-5150. CityofBerkeley.info/[illegible]

SOCIAL EVENTS

[illegible] New Year's Eve [illegible] Party For more information, see [illegible]. Thu., Dec. 23, 8 p.m.-midnight, $20. Crowne Plaza Hotel & Convention Center, 45 John Glenn Dr., Concord. 925-825-7700.

[illegible] With live music by [illegible] and [illegible], followed by a vegetarian Indian [illegible]. Oakland [illegible] recommended, call 510-278-2444. Sat., Dec. 25, 3-6 p.m. free. [illegible], 15011 Madison Ave., San Leandro. 510-278-2444.

[illegible] People [illegible] For people over 75. Fourth and Second Thursday of every month, 1:30 p.m. free. Berkeley Gray Panthers Office, 5603 Addison St., Berkeley. 510 548-9696.

SPORTS & OUTDOORS-PARTICIPATORY

Walnut Creek on Ice The outdoor ice rink will be open throughout the holiday season. See [illegible]WalnutCreek.com for full schedule of lessons and special events. Through Jan. 17, 2011. $11-$15. Civic Park Convention Center, 1375 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-943-5852.

SPORTS-SPECTATOR

Cal Men's Basketball vs. Kansas Wed., Dec. 22, 8 p.m. $10-$22. Haas Pavilion, UC Berkeley, Berkeley. 510-642-[illegible]. CalBears.com/Facilities/Haas-Pavilion.html

Golden Gate Fields [illegible] Days Scheduled, [illegible] Golden Gate Fields, 1100 Eastshore Hwy., Berkeley. 510-559-7300. GoldenGateFields.com

Golden State Warriors vs. Portland Trailblazers Sat., Dec. 25, 7:30 p.m., $15-$400. Oracle Arena, 7000 Coliseum Way, Oakland. 510-569-2121. Coliseum.com.

[illegible] Oakland vs. Indianapolis Colts Sun., Dec. 26, 1:05 p.m. $43-$170. Coliseum, 7000 Coliseum Wy. [illegible]

PICKS

Festivus Jubilee

Any holiday that's good enough for Seinfeld already has the stamp of approval as far as we're concerned. Originally conceived as a quasi-satirical protest to the season's materialist excess, now more closely tied to a general spirit of tongue-in-cheek irreverence, Festivus replaces a Christmas tree or menorah with an industrialist aluminum pole, and revels in traditions including a wrestling match and a disgruntled airing of grievances. On Thursday, Dec. 23, the folks at **Bunjo's Comedy Lounge** (6513 Regional St., Dublin) are throwing a self-proclaimed **Festivus Jubilee** featuring sets from local comics as well as various themed activities. 6-9 p.m., $12 (plus two-item minimum). 925-264-4413 or BunjosComedy.com — *Ellen Cushing*

Zanzibar Puppets' Cinderella

Zanzibar Puppets' Cinderella

Puppets can be a tough sell for anyone over the age of five, but since its inception in 2008, **Zanzibar Puppet Theater** has been creating refined modern puppet shows that are as likely to enthrall parents as their children with hand-sewn costumes, sophisticated lighting and sets, and characters that are closer to works of art. Sock puppets these are not. On Sunday, Dec. 26, the company, which is currently operating out of **Uptown Body and Fender** (401 26th St., Oakland), presents its signature show: a grown-up, classed-up take on *Cinderella* that's [illegible] imbued with an undeniable sense of whimsy. 2 & 4 p.m., $12. ZanzibarPuppets.BigCartel.com — *E.C.*

Golden State Warriors

[illegible] **Warriors!** [illegible] The Golden State basketball team is there for you on December 25 when the family dynamic gets a little too fractious. The NBA often uses the holiday as a place to showcase some of its biggest and brightest; perhaps this game against the **Portland Trailblazers** is part of the early returns program. The game at **Oracle Arena** (7000 Coliseum Way, Oakland) between two losing teams may be the hoops equivalent of a lump of coal, but it beats grandma's fruitcake and photo album by a fast-break lay-up. 7:30 p.m., $10-$400. NBA.com/Warriors — *Kibby Kleiman*

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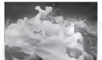
MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

Ripple Effects

Two artists find beauty in hydrodynamics.

Water in motion is the subject of two shows in Oakland this month that are perfect for Bay Area wave-huggers: digital color photos by **Carol Inez Charney** and oil paintings on canvas by **David Molesky**.

Charney's new medium- and large-format photos continue the eye-popping exploration of color and pattern that she began with *Interior Landscape* last October. With degrees in both painting and photography, Charney employs a mixed-media or cross-disciplinary approach to image-making, re-photographing her photos of architectural colored-rectangle motifs through panes of glass that she floods with water in various ways, so that her blurred photo color patches are overlaid with silvery streams that pick up the hues of their surroundings and backgrounds. Diffuse Rothko clouds, bright Hockney palettes, and winding Morris Louis rivulets thus combine "behind" glass — nice scenic weather! Charney mounts the photos (cryptically named "BEE 1," "EOM 2," and "NYC 3," and the like) on masonite or aluminum laminated with non-glare plexiglass, although unmounted paper prints suitable for traditional framing are also available. ***Recent Work*** runs through January 29 at **Slate Contemporary** (4770 Telegraph Ave., Oakland) 510-652-4085 or www.SlateArtandDesign.com.



David Molesky's "Etheric Impulse."

In ***Turbulent Mirror***, the other discipline-spanning show, Molesky (who, incidentally, studied with Odd Nerdrum) is showing paintings derived from photographs of whitewater surf caught in all its boiling, frothy glory. "Passing Breakers," "Glass Type," "Sliding Down Tongues," and "Etheric Impulse" are dramatic but relatively objective studies of wave dynamics, while "Punch Bowl" and "Tone Tide" take on colorations probably not found this side of a Turner painting or an active volcano like Krakatoa. Other paintings depict beach, sunsets and cloud formations, while a set of circular-format paintings suggests views through microscopes and telescopes — and the old idea (promulgated by NASA circa 1969) that the blue world in the black void is a pretty darn special home planet. A portion of Molesky's sales will be donated to **Project Kaisei**, sponsored by Sausalito nonprofit **Ocean Voyages Institute**, focusing on the Texas-size North Pacific Gyre, a vortex of plastic junk from all over the world trapped between mainland US and Hawaii. The first voyage of the sail-powered Kaisei is scheduled for this summer. An artist talk and a presentation by Project Kaisei's **Mary Crowley** are scheduled for January; call gallery for date. *Turbulent Mirror* runs through January 22 at **Rae Douglass Gallery** (2911 Claremont Ave., Berkeley) 510-848-1228 or DouglassGallery.com.

—DeWitt Cheng

To share this story, type: ebx.ly/p/rippleeffects

ART GALLERIES

Actual Cafe. Holiday Group Art Show. Featuring work by Brian Richardson, Eva Silverman, and Alison Babayan, plus prints and Bonset merchandise for sale. Through Jan. 15, 2011. 6334 San Pablo Ave., Oakland. 510-653-9386. ActualCafe.com.

Artifact Salon and Gallery. Now Hidden on Paper. Work by Alex [illegible]. Through Jan. 18, 2011. 1837 Solano Ave., Berkeley. 510-[illegible]-3500. ArtifactSalon.com.

Berkeley Art Center. Berkeley Art Center Members Showcase. Work by the Center's members, focused around the theme "green." Through Jan. 23, 2011. 1275 Walnut St. (in Live Oak Park), Berkeley. 510-644-6893. BerkeleyArtCenter.org.

Berkeley Potters Guild. Berkeley Potters' Guild Annual Holiday Exhibition. With pottery and sculpture by 14 local artists. Through Dec. 24. 731 Jones St., Berkeley. 510-524-1031. www.berkeleypotters.com.

Frank Bette Center for the Arts. Short and Sweet. Group show. Through Dec. 22. Free. **Digital Alchemy: An Exploration of Archetypes.** Mixed-media work by Deborah Griffin. Through Dec. 22. 1601 Paru St., Alameda. 510-523-6957. FrankBetteCenter.org.

Cafe [illegible] California. Untitled. Landmarks of Northern California. Watercolors by Heidi [illegible]. Through Jan. 1, 2011. 1333 [illegible] Way, Oakland.

Chandra Cerrito Contemporary. The Modern[illegible]. Work by Jason [illegible], Marta Lalic, and Jonathan Runcio. Through Jan. 22, 2011. 480 23rd Street, Oakland. 510-260-7494. ChandraCerrito.com.

Creative Growth Art Center. Annual Holiday Art Show. Creative Growth's annual holiday art show, featuring work by people with developmental and physical disabilities. Through Jan. 14, 2011. 355 24th St., Oakland. 510-836-2340. CreativeGrowth.org.

David Brower Center. Gallery: Running the Numbers. Work by Chris Jordan. Through Jan. 1, 2011. 2150 Allston Way, Berkeley.

Expressions Gallery. Sweet Sweet. Fine art in various media, as well as handmade jewelry, clothing and more, by local artists. Through Jan. 1, 2011. 2035 Ashby Ave., Berkeley. 510-644-4930. ExpressionsGallery.org.

[illegible] Art Gallery. Time and Place. New photography by Sue Ford, Dave Mendell and Bill [illegible]. Through Dec. 31. 7928 Stockton Ave., El Cerrito. 510-[illegible].

Float. Annual: The Mechanics of Texture. Collage and sculpture by Shelly [illegible] and Benjamin Cowden, respectively. Through Jan. 29, 2011. [illegible] Calcot Pl., Oakland. 510-535-1702. TheFloatCenter.com.

The Hive Gallery. Bright Night. Group show of small works. Through Dec. 31. 301 [illegible] St., Oakland. 510-712-8728.

Important Projects. Bee By. Work by Jennie [illegible]. Through Jan. 8, 2011. 2300 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-444-9140. ImportantProjects.com.

Joyce Gordon Gallery. Things Left Behind. New work by Michael B. Platt. Through Dec. 31. 406 14th St., Oakland. 510-465-8928. JoyceGordonGallery.com.

Kala Gallery and Art Untitled. Kala Annual Exhibition. New work in various media by over 100 artists affiliated with Kala. Through Feb. 19, 2011. 1060 Heinz Ave., Berkeley. 510-549-2977. Kala.org.

Krowswork. [illegible] Rainbow. Photography and video by Alexander [illegible] and video and installation by [illegible]. Through Jan. 28, 2011. 480 23rd St., Oakland.

Kathi's Frames + Art. [illegible]. Prints and [illegible] by the local designer. Through Jan. 22, 2011. [illegible] 22nd St., Oakland. 510-[illegible]. KathiFrames.com.

[illegible] Gallery. [illegible] to Light. With large-scale watercolor paintings by Matthew [illegible] and digital video by Rose [illegible]. Through Feb. 8, 2011. 1201 8th St., Berkeley. 510-558-0093.

Mercury 20 Gallery. Mercury Multiples: Artist's Multiples. Artist's Multiples by Charlie Milgrim, Katherine King, Pat Fossati and others. With a reception Fri., Jan. 7, 6 p.m.-8 p.m. Through Mar. 29, 2011. 475 25th St., Oakland. 510-[illegible]. MercuryTwenty.com.

NIAD Art Center. Art from the Heart. Featuring over 80 works by the Institute's artists and staff. Through Dec. 30. Free. 551 23rd St., Richmond. 510-620-0290. NIADart.org.

[illegible] Art Gallery. Time and Quantity. Photographs by Kathryn Burnham and Joseph Sowell. Through Jan. 14, 2011. 1537 Solano Ave., Berkeley. 510-525-[illegible]. [illegible]Arts.com.

Oakopolis Creativity Center. Dec. [illegible] Life. Oakopolis' annual winter group show, featuring work by Jennie [illegible], Anna [illegible], Marcy Voyevod and others. Through Jan. 20, 2011. 447 25th St., Oakland.

Pro Arts. Gallery. [illegible] 2011. Video work selected by the [illegible]-based curator [illegible]. Through Jan. 14, 2011. 150 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland. 510-763-4361.

[illegible] Art [illegible]: [illegible] in One Night. [illegible] by Phoebe Ashley. Through Jan. 3, 2011. 365 45th St., Oakland. 510-[illegible].

Swarm Studios & Gallery. Things Are Expanding. Group show. Through Jan. 16, 2011. 560 2nd St., Oakland. 510-839-2787. SwarmGallery.com.

[illegible]. Short Works, Important [illegible]. Work by Ben [illegible], Elizabeth Bernstein, Nicholas Bohac, Filip Lucas, Jenna [illegible] and Erik Parra. Through Jan. 3, 2011. 788 40th St., Oakland. [illegible]Space.com.

PICKS

Plot

The title of this two-person show presumably has two meanings: plot as narrative and plot as piece of land. **Samantha Lautman**'s large graphite drawings ("Cemetery," "Flight," and "The Crowd") and graphite-acrylic painting ("The Apartment") depict groups of people engaged in various activities, as seen from high vantage points. The narratives are unclear, as in drawings in her previous show at **Kala Gallery** depicting real-life random activity from a god's-eye perspective. Plots of the real estate type and the symbolism of architecture are explored instead in **Jeff Ray**'s mixed-media, pedestal-mounted architectural sculptures in sheet metal ("Commerce Building," "House (Basic)," "Cultural Center," and "Spiritual Center"), which include sound effects and LED lighting. The dark, unadorned forms, curving and sharp-edged, have a rather sinister, conspiratorial air on third thought. ***Plot*** runs through January 2 at **Royal Nonesuch Gallery** (4132 Telegraph Ave., Oakland) 415-690-3041 or RoyalNonesuchGallery.com. — *DeWitt Cheng*

March Into the Sea

[illegible] may make its depressing [illegible], but assuming that Adam Smith's invisible hand will save us is just more free-market fundamentalist folly. **Crystal Morey**, who believes that "new beginnings ... are necessary, whether desired or not," examines the water cycle in her new sculptures, but — don't change that channel! — so subtly that even warming-deniers may unwittingly benefit; such is the sly power of art. Her heroines in these tiny worlds (earthen clouds covered with water and verdure) warn us of both the perils of heedlessness (the Hindu Dark Mother goddess Kali in "World Aflame" and the clear-cut hillsides in "Log Voyage: Darkness Can't Come Soon Enough"), and, alternatively, of model green living (as symbolized in the egg-shaped nest and tomb, respectively, in "Ground Voyage: Winter for a Year" and "Dog Here, and You Will" of the Heart"). Are we swans or are we lemmings? ***March Into the Sea*** runs through January 22 at **Rowan Morrison** (330 40th St., Oakland) 510-384-5344 or RowanMorrison.com. — *D.C.*

Jeff Ray's "Spiritual Center"

DeWitt Cheng

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THEATER & DANCE

COMEDY

Friends Festivus special Celebrate the (fictional) holiday and and hear several comedians as well as Friends/Festivus-special activities, including an Airing of the Grievances ceremony and a Stupid Human Trick show. Thu., Dec. 23, 8:30 p.m., $12 plus two-item minimum. Burgers Comedy Lounge, 6513 Regional St., Dublin. 925-264-4413. BurgersComedy.com.

The Business Featuring local comics Sean Keane, Alex Hall, Becky Special and Chris Garcia, with rotating guests. Wednesdays, 8 p.m. $5. The Dark Room, 2263 Mission St., San Francisco. 415-401-7987. DarkRoomSF.com.

Comedy by Michael Fourth Saturday of every month. 8 p.m. $10-$25. Englander Sports Pub, 101 Parrott St., San Leandro. 510-357-3571. EnglanderPub.com.

Comedy Night Hosted by Tony Sparks. Thursdays, 7 p.m. free. Brainwash Cafe, 1122 Folsom St., San Francisco. 415-861-3663. Brainwash.com.

Comedy Open Mic Sign-ups at 5:30 p.m., each comic gets 5 minutes. Mondays, 7 p.m. $5. Tommy T's Comedy Steakhouse, 5104 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton. 925-227-1800. TommyTs.com.

Comedy Oven Hosted by Danny the Mack Cast with rotating hosts. Mondays, 8 p.m., $10. Rockit Room, 406 Clement St., San Francisco. 415-387-6343. RockitRoom.com.

High Street Comedy Hosted by Tom Anderson, with weekly guests. Starting Dec. 29. Tuesdays, 7:30-9 p.m. Continues through Jan. 25. $5-$15. High Street Station, 1303 High Street, Alameda.

Jolly Fun Wed., Dec. 22, 7:30 p.m., Thu., Dec. 23, 7:30 p.m. $18-$22. Tommy T's Comedy Steakhouse, 5104 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton. 925-227-1800. TommyTs.com.

Gold 'n Jam Sign-ups at 6:30 p.m., show @ 7 p.m. Fourth and Second Friday of every month, 6:30-8 p.m., free. Woody's Cafe, 1841 Park Blvd., Oakland. 510-488-8091. WoodysCafe.weebly.com/index.html.

Magic & Beer with Ted Al Catzes & Friends bringing you an Friends Friends performance of magic and comedy games. Saturdays, 8 p.m., $20. Off-Market Theater, Stage 254, San Francisco. 415-646-0776.

Paul Mooney VIP packages include champagne ($50) or champagne, dinner, autographs, and pictures ($100). Dec. 27-30, 7 & 9 p.m. Fri., Dec. 31, 11 p.m. $25 general, $50-$100 VIP. Black Repertory Theater, 3201 Adeline St., Berkeley. 510-652-2120.

Saturday Night Comedy with Ann Randolph, Marga Gomez, "les Slackers" Reunion and Johnny Steele Featuring a rotating lineup of other performers. Saturdays, 8 p.m. $15-35 sliding scale, $50 reserved seats. The Marsh Berkeley at Cafe Arts Center, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-644-4048. TheMarsh.org.

SF Comedy Showcase Sundays, 8 p.m. $8. Punch Line, 444 Battery St., San Francisco. 415-397-4337. SFPunchlineComedyClub.com.

Big Fat Free And Easy Off Comedy Show with Will Durst and Friends With Johnny Steele and other guests. Tue., Dec. 28, 8 p.m. $18-$20. Julia Morgan Center for the Arts, 2640 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-8542. JuliaMorgan.org.

Yoshi's Presents Gallagher's Holiday Smash Event Sun., Dec. 26, 7 p.m., $30. Yoshi's San Francisco, 1330 Fillmore St., San Francisco. 415-655-5600. Yoshis.com.

DANCE-PERFORMANCE

The Nutcracker A faithful performance of Tchaikovsky's holiday classic. Tuesdays-Sundays. Continues through Dec. 27. $25-$248. San Francisco Veterans War Memorial Building, 401 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco. 415-865-2000.

The Nutcracker Featuring dancers from the Oakland Ballet Company and local dance schools, with music by the East Bay Symphony. With a special "Sweet Dreams" reception after the Dec. 23 and Dec. 26 afternoon performances. Thu., Dec. 23, 2 & 7 p.m. Fri., Dec. 24, 11 a.m. Sun., Dec. 26, 2 p.m., $11-$60. Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland. 510-465-6400. ParamountTheatre.com.

LIVE VARIETY

Naughty and Nice! A Meg and Billy Cabaret Holiday cabaret with available and-vile tees Meg Mackay and Billy Philadelphia. No show Dec. 24 and 25. Tuesdays-Saturdays, 7:30 p.m. Continues through Dec. 31. $22-$25. Aurora Theatre, 2081 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-843-4822. AuroraTheatre.org.

The World's Funniest Bubble Show Interactive family-friendly show from the Amazing Bubble Man. Sundays, 11 a.m. Through Dec. 23, 11 a.m. through Dec. 30, 11 a.m. Continues through Jan. 27. $8-$11. The Marsh Berkeley @ Cafe Arts Center, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. 415-826-5750. TheMarsh.org.

THEATER & PERFORMING ARTS

The Arabian Nights Special holiday presentation of the play based on the famous book. Directed by Mary Zimmerman. Wednesdays, Sundays, 7 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays, 8 p.m. Saturdays-Thursdays, Sundays, 2 p.m. Fri., Dec. 18, 2 p.m. Continues through Dec. 30. $19-$73. Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 2015 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-647-2949. BerkeleyRep.org.

The Composer Is Dead Tony Taccone adapts young and grown-ups alike in this adaptation of Lemony Snicket's story. With a variety of promotions and special events; check Berkeley Rep's Friends for full schedule. Thursdays, Saturdays, 2 & 8 p.m., Sundays, 2 & 7 p.m. Tuesdays, Fridays, 8 p.m. Wednesdays, 1 p.m. Sat., Jan. 15, 8 p.m. Continues through Jan. 15. $39-$73. Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 2015 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-647-2949. BerkeleyRep.org.

Becoming Julia Morgan Play about the famous architect's life written by Belinda Taylor, directed by Barbara Oliver and starring Jonie Stevens as Morgan; special available at BrownPaperTickets.com or by calling 510-664-3664. Thursdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m. Sundays, 5 p.m. Continues through Jan. 8. $24-$38. Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant Ave., Berkeley. 510-848-7800. BerkeleyCityClub.com.

Of the Earth World premiere of the drama inspired by The Odyssey. Written and directed by Jon Tracy with original music by Gemnian West. Thursdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m., Sundays, 5 p.m. Wednesdays, 1 p.m. Continues through Jan. 16. $11-$30. Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-6500. ShotgunPlayers.org.

PICKS

Of the Earth

The ancient Greeks left most things in the lap of the Gods, but playwright **Jon Tracy** sees a motivation behind every action. Thus the issue of free will looms large in each of his works, including those that tackle Greek mythology. This month he presents the second of two "Salt Plays" produced under the auspices of **Shotgun Players**. The first, which debuted this summer, focused on Homer's *Iliad*; this one, titled *Of the Earth*, reexamines *The Odyssey* through a contemporary lens. It's high-concept and low-tech, with actors constantly banging drums in the background. Tracy repurposes several actors from previous plays, such as **Anna Ishida**, who plays a strident Poseidon, and **Charisse Loriaux**, a snaky, seductive Circe. Resonances between the Trojan War and the current situation in Iraq certainly aren't lost on Tracy — he brings them out in creative ways. Lloyd Vance's haunting video projections are both an extension of the characters' psychology and an enhancement of Nina Ball's sparse set design. Through January 16 at **The Ashby Stage** (1901 Ashby Ave., Berkeley). 841-6500. ShotgunPlayers.org. — *Rachel Swan*

Of the Earth.

Lemony Snicket's The Composer Is Dead

Nothing's quite as hard as turning a children's primer into — ahem — "living, breathing theatre," and few directors have ever made the attempt. But Berkeley Rep helmsman Tony Taccone will try just about any idea that strikes his fancy. His reinterpretation of *Lemony Snicket's The Composer Is Dead* is a dizzying multimedia affair, developed with the help of Snicket (pen name of author **Daniel Handler**) and New York City puppet company Phantom Limb. It's bizarre in the way that children's stories often are, with three seemingly disparate sections held together by narrator **Geoff Hoyle**, who is the play's only human actor. *Composer* begins with a clown skit, in which Hoyle toasts the works of live performance, even as everything goes wrong. An animated video follows, allowing us to take a trip backstage and see the cast of incompetents (neurotic stage managers, violent choreographers, irascible technicians) who pull the wires. Then there's the one we've been waiting for: A dead composer slumped over his puppet orchestra, under the wary eye of an investigator (played by Hoyle) who has to cross-examine everyone. The sets are picture book come to life. Through January 15 at **Berkeley Repertory Theatre** (2025 Addison St., Berkeley). 510-647-2949 or BerkeleyRep.org. — *R.S.*

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The East Bay Express is looking for a part time copy editor/page designer to join our editorial team. The Express specializes in hard-hitting journalism and boasts the Bay Area's most comprehensive arts and entertainment coverage and listings.

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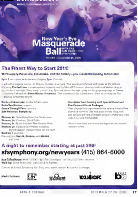
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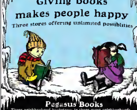
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THEATER REVIEW

FORK THIS

PianoFight gets into the Christmas spirit with a choose-your-own-adventure production

By Rachel Swan

There probably was no fourth wall to begin with at **PianoFight Productions**. Virtually all of the company's theatrical works involve some form of audience participation. Sometimes, we get to cast judgment, as is the case with the annual "ShortLived" playwriting competition. Other times, we throw vegetables — hopefully within the sanctity of "Throw Rotten Veggies at the Actors Night," though one could imagine a spoiled tomato being hurled from the back row of **Off Market Theaters** at any point in time. It's probably the only stage in San Francisco where an actor will stay cool when he's hit by a cucumber. Obnoxious behavior isn't just sanctioned, it's embraced. And that's always cause for celebration.

Particularly at this time of year, when holiday stress gets compounded by seasonal depression and the last thing any of us wants to do is watch Scrooge get in verbal altercations with the Ghost of Christmas Past. With that in mind, PianoFight came up with an anti-Christmas Christmas show that allows the audience to steer the drama. ***A Merry Forking Christmas*** had its genesis two years ago, after the company teamed up with San Francisco writer **Daniel Heath**, who won PianoFight's first-ever ShortLived playwriting competition. Heath's original *Forking*, called *Fork Off on Your Own Forking Adventure Which You Forked Forking*, was a choose-your-own-adventure play about sex. Actors used vote-by-applause as the mechanism to decide what would happen. The concept was inspired, the props were minimal, and the script was funny enough to guarantee a bizarre outcome.

A Christmas version inevitably followed. *Merry Forking* is set in a shopping mall on Christmas Eve, where a small-time weed dealer in a Santa Claus suit (**Derek Fisher**) uses a cookie vendor (**Nicole Hammersla**) as his mule. A security guard (**Devin McNulty**) tries to bust them, but he's hopelessly — and inconveniently — smitten with the cookie vendor. Meanwhile, a young soon-to-be-married couple (**Rachel Ferensowicz** and **Alex Boyd**) are quarreling bitterly in the store aisles. Various other characters enter the fray, including a few stoners, a mortuary attendant (**Ruth Grossinger**), a bespectacled Tiny Tim (**Jed Goldstein**), and a sassy New York grandmother (**Gabi Patacsil**). Pianist **Arlen Hart** glues the whole thing together with an original score played on a small upright piano at stage right. At several points he interrupts the action with a two-bar riff, which is our cue to vote on what happens next. Will grandma eat the weed cookie? Will Phoebe ditch her fiancé and run off with Santa Claus? Will the security guard shut down Monique's cookie stand, or let her go free?

Show Details

Through December 30 at Off-Market Theaters (965 Mission St., San Francisco). $20-$30. PianoFight.com

Obviously, none of these questions are purely open-ended. They're all designed to lead us in a certain direction, and the outcome is preordained. That said, they do make the production more exciting. Not to mention that weed, adultery, betrayal, crippled children, and a bumbling Santa Claus help keep things spicy. Goldstein and Patacsil play all the minor characters with gusto, often outshining their fellow actors. Goldstein steals the show with his rendition of a wheezing Cratchit child.

[illegible]

The choose-your-own-adventure gets more sinister.

Concept plays are a hard thing to make work, particularly if you're handing off creative control. Heath obviously took the risks into consideration. He made the plot pretty thin — it's really just a loose agglomeration of storylines that all interconnect, in a setting that lends itself to happenstance. The mall is one of those labyrinthine spaces where it's easy to be led astray, or have a random interaction with a stranger. Not to mention it embodies so many features of Christmas that we don't always take into consideration: tawdry commercialism, the urgency of a clock ticking, the sense of being lost in a crowd. For all the candy-cane decorations and melodically wafting piano music, it's quite sinister.

PianoFight gets that, and as the play drags on, its tone gets progressively more ominous. Phoebe and Charles' marriage threatens to disintegrate. Charlotte, the morgue worker, launches into a seductive monologue about embalmment. Monique insists that drug-dealing is the only way she can pay her rent. Audience members still get to commandeer the action, yet by the time we reach the second half, a bitter outcome seems inevitable.

As for outcomes, PianoFight's future is a little uncertain, too. Off-Market Theaters will close in January, so company directors **Rob Ready** and **Dan Williams** hope to move their operation to a large building near Union Square, which once housed Joe's Restaurant. If all goes according to plan, they'll secure the lease and start construction on a restaurant and two new theaters in January. Ready wants to hold a soft opening by April 1, in time for the next ShortLived. ●

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LECTURES & LIT

Becoming the Book

The Berkeley Rep School of Theatre teaches kids to love literature through acting.

It's a whodunit and, as such, its characters have alibis. A homicide? They had nothing to do with it. That the characters happen to be musical instruments just makes their stories all the more plausible. Who would second-guess a clarinet?

Lemony Snicket's The Composer Is Dead is a musical with text by local novelist **Daniel Handler** aka **Lemony Snicket**, that's onstage at the **Berkeley Repertory Theatre** through January 15. But it's also a tool with which East Bay kids are now learning to love literature.

The **Berkeley Rep School of Theatre** (2025 Addison St., Berkeley), which offers courses and intensives for kids and adults at its downtown Berkeley headquarters, also operates the **Story Builders** program in K-6 schools and libraries throughout nine Bay Area counties.

Following a model created by Joanne Seelig and Gendell Hernandez, each hour-long Target Story Builders session begins with a book, story, or play being read aloud to a group of children. As the session progresses, the children interpret, improvise, explain, and act out the story they've just heard.

"It's a literacy program that gives students multiple ways into the works," said Berkeley Rep School of Theatre outreach coordinator and longtime teaching artist **Dave Maier**. "Children learn in many different ways. Some are not great readers but are good kinesthetic learners, so they comprehend the work better if they can move around. So we scaffold the curriculum."

During the read-alouds, "we intentionally don't show any pictures, because we want the students to create those images in their minds." After they've heard a story and created mental images, the kids are invited to pose as the characters, "frozen statue" style, then create dialogue and scenes.

Lemony Snicket's The Composer Is Dead will be the subject of a Story Builders session at the **Oakland Public Library's Cesar Chavez Branch** (3301 E. 12th St., Oakland) on Thursday, December 23. Updating *Peter and the Wolf*'s method of personalizing an orchestra's elements, the story's characters include a tuba, a viola, and other instruments.

"As school budgets are being cut and arts education is being annihilated, we can use theater art to teach anything" — even mathematics. Maier fondly remembers a session in which students in a middle-school math class staged the equation for finding the radius of a circle.

"They demonstrated what the radius was, and they told me they had to be squared in order for the equation to work. If students can get up and act something out or say it out loud to others, they're demonstrating that they have knowledge and that they understand." 3 p.m., free. OaklandPublicLibrary.org

— Anneli Rufus

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PICKS

Book Discussion Group

A work of fiction about a work of fiction. **Geraldine Brooks'** Pulitzer Prize-winning novel ***March*** has as its protagonist John March, the father character in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. Brooks follows March through his years as a Civil War army chaplain, abolitionist, and friend to slaves. It's the topic for this month's meeting of the **Kensington Library Book Discussion Group** (61 Arlington Ave., Kensington) on Monday, Dec. 27, 7 p.m., free. ACLibrary.org *— Anneli Rufus*

Poetry Group

Does your New Year's resolution involve reading more quatrains, writing more iambic pentameter or simply sharing more poetry — no matter who wrote it — with others who love it as much as you do? A newly formed group, **Poets of the Square Table**, meets at the **Hercules Public Library** (109 Civic Dr., Hercules) on Monday, Dec. 27. All are welcome to share their own work or that of others; bring copies to distribute or read aloud. 7 p.m., free. ACLibrary.org *— A.R.*

Chinese Calligraphy Exhibition

Having completed a pilgrimage to Mecca, **Hajji Noor Deen Mi Guangjiang** is credited with revitalizing the centuries-old art of Chinese Muslim calligraphy, which he studied in Egypt and his native China. His book *Arabic Calligraphy in the Chinese Tradition* is written in Chinese, English, and Arabic. At the **Institute of East Asian Studies** (2223 Fulton St., Berkeley) on Wednesday, Dec. 29 (and through March 4, 2011), "**Crystal of Collected Wisdom**" is an exhibition of his work. IEAS.Berkeley.edu *— A.R.*

Editor's Note: Due to the holiday, we highly recommend that you call ahead of time to confirm events before leaving the house.

LITERARY EVENTS

Albany Library Great Books Discussion Group Fourth Tuesday of every month, 1:30-3:30 p.m., free. Albany Library, 1247 Marin Ave., Albany. 510-526-3720. ACLibrary.org.

Dimond Branch Book Discussion Group A monthly literary circle for adults. Fourth Monday of every month, 6:30-8 p.m. Oakland Public Library Dimond Branch, 3565 Fruitvale Ave., Oakland. 510-535-5600. OaklandLibrary.org.

Kensington Library Book Club This month, *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky. Fourth Monday of every month, 7 p.m. Kensington Branch Library, 61 Arlington Ave., Kensington. 510-524-3043.

Oakland Dimond Book Discussion Group Fourth Monday of every month, 6 p.m. Oakland Public Library Dimond Branch, 4565 Fruitvale Ave., Oakland. 510-535-5623. OaklandLibrary.org.

Music of the World/[illegible] With [illegible]. Fourth and Second Sunday of every month, 3:30 p.m., free. Rasputin's Books, 3288 [illegible] St., Berkeley. 510-352-4780. [illegible], Inc.

OPL [illegible] Book Discussion Group Read, share your enjoyment of reading with others in the community. Fourth Monday of every month, 6:30 p.m. Oakland Public Library Golden Gate Branch, 5606 San Pablo Ave., Oakland. 510-597-5023. OaklandLibrary.org.

PUBLIC INTEREST

Free Book Exchange Give and get free books of all genres. Saturdays, Sundays, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., free. Book Exchange, 15820 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. 510-526-1940.

Oakland Council Committee Meetings Tue., Dec. 28, 12:30-9 p.m. Oakland City Hall, 1 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Oakland.

Small Claims Court Workshop Learn how to file and defend a case in small claims court. Wed., Dec. 29, 4:30 p.m., free. Richmond Main Library, 325 Civic Center St., Richmond. 510-620-6561. CLRichmond.ca.us/

SPOKEN WORD

Oakland Poetry Slam and Open-Mic Open-mic and poetry competition hosted by [illegible] and [illegible] Jeffries, with DJ Mr E. Fourth Thursday of every month, 8 p.m., $7-$10. Club [illegible], 12th St., Oakland. 510-763-0404.

Thursday at Word Beat A weekly spoken-word and poetry gathering. Thursdays, 8 p.m., free. AngelFire.com/poetry/wordbeat. Mediterraneum Cafe, 2475 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-549-1128.

Dimond Word Art Open-Mic Night Poets, storytellers, musicians, and all other artists are invited to share their work. Arrive early to sign up. Second and Fourth Friday of every month, 7:30 p.m., free. [illegible]. Zocalo Coffeehouse, 645 Bancroft Ave., San Leandro. 510-686-0131. ZocaloCoffeehouse.com.

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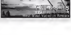

BODY&SOUL

Om Sweet Om

Swami Mangalananda divides her time between ashrams in the East Bay and India

Swami Mangalananda.

One day 22 years ago, a former hippie threw her shorn hair into the Ganges, said her final monastic vows, and never looked back. **Swami Mangalananda** describes herself as "a WASP from Wisconsin," but she's also a Hindu nun and the secretary of **Badarikashrama** (15602 Maubert Ave., San Leandro).

"My interest in non-Western philosophies began in high school and continued through the Sixties," she said. "I became a vegetarian. I listened to Indian music. By dressing in Madras clothes and Indian jewelry and living communally, a lot of us in those days were imitating the people of Eastern cultures without completely realizing it. I went through a very strong Christian phase, then an agnostic phase. I was disenchanted with religion, yet I had spiritual longings and altered states of consciousness and a lot of spiritual experiences — not just from drugs."

A devoted peace activist and civil-rights campaigner, "I developed a very strong attachment for Mahatma Gandhi, and that attachment stayed with me," Mangalananda said. "I didn't become a yuppie. Sometimes I actually *chose* poverty."

While living in San Leandro and studying health education at San Francisco State University, she wandered into Badarikashrama one day. It was the first Hindu temple she'd ever visited. Immediately inspired by its founder, Swami Omkarananda, she began working at the ashram, taking classes, and becoming first a student monk, then a full nun. Omkarananda "tested me for so long," Mangalananda said, "because a lot of white people join these things and don't stick with them."

She stuck with it. In 1997, Omkarananda transferred her to Badarikashrama's fifty-acre sister ashram in Madhballi, India. Over four hundred local children attend the ashram's school.

"When I come back to the US, I feel homesick for India," said Mangalananda, who will host Badarikashrama's 20th-annual free **Christmas Day concert and dinner** on Saturday, December 25. This year's concert will be performed by father-and-son *veena* players **Srikanth Chary** and **Hrishikesh Chary**, accompanied by **N. Narayan** on the *mridangam*, a Karnatic drum. Traditional vegan and vegetarian dishes are served buffet style — "and we have no intention of converting anyone. Hindus are not that way. Yes, there are guru cults out there, but we are a liberal family-oriented organization. That's part of the reason I embraced Hinduism after being so involved with Christianity: there's no conversion mentality," Mangalananda said.

The nativity scene she created for the event includes figurines of the Holy Family, Buddha, and Ganesha.

"I still say I'm a Christian. I just don't believe that Jesus was the only way. He was an avatar. I accept many forms of worshiping."

Mangalananda misses the sense of community that pervades Indian life but which she has experienced far too rarely in her home country — even at Woodstock, which she attended in 1969. "I found it decadent," she said. "It didn't have the force it could have had, because it was lost in sensuality. American culture is lost in sensuality and materialism. It's our sickness. Every culture has its sicknesses, you see."

— *Anneli Rufus*

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Editor's Note: Due to the holiday, we highly recommend that you call ahead of time to confirm events listings ahead.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Adult Asthma Education An ongoing support group. Expect ... call 510-204-1586 for info and location. Fourth Thursday of every month, 3-5:30 p.m. East Bay, various locations.

Brain Injury Life Skills Support Group Three different support groups offered for brain injury survivors and their caregivers. For information, call 510-204-3337. Second and Fourth Thursday of every month, 3:30-5 p.m., free. Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, 2450 Ashby Ave., Berkeley, 510-655-4000.

Community Healing Night With workshops and dinner by professional healers and technicians. Refreshments provided. Fourth Wednesday of every month, 7-8 p.m. Continues through Dec. 31. free. Rhythmic Cultural Works, 2563 Blanding Ave., Alameda. 510-848-5860. Rhythmic.org.

Look Good ... Feel Better Cosmetologists and wig consultants help women with cancer cope with appearance changes. Fourth Monday of every month, 10 a.m.-noon, free. Alta Bates Medical Center, Herrick Campus, Berkeley, 510-204-4444.

Nourishing the Mind-Body Connection Free class/workshop for cancer survivors. Call 510-869-8833 for information. Second and Fourth Tuesday of every month, 1:15-2:30 p.m., free. Alta Bates Medical Center Summit Campus, 450 30th St., Oakland, 510-869-8735.

PERSONAL GROWTH

Elder's Dance A group for older [illegible] interested in creating a support system and exploring conscious aging. Second and Fourth Sunday of every month, 1:30-4 p.m., free. North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Ave., Berkeley, 510-981-5190.

More Listings Online
Find hundreds of up-to-date A&E listings at EastBayExpress.com or m.EastBayExpress.com

RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY

Angel and Spirit Guide Communication Learn how to communicate with angels and meet [illegible]. Sat., Dec. 25, 1-4 p.m., $10. Angel Light Books, 3347 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley.

Christmas Candlelight Service Wed., Dec. 22, 7:15 p.m., free. Unity of San Leandro, 1470 Santa Maria St., San Leandro.

Christmas Day Eucharist Sat., Dec. 25, 10 a.m., free. All Souls Episcopal Church, 2220 Cedar St., Berkeley, 510-848-1755. www.allsoulsparish.org/.

Season Light Celebration of Reason, Compassion, and Hope With songs, carols, and more. Agnostics, atheists, and other "religious naturalists" welcome. Thu., Dec. 23, 7 p.m., free. Unitarian Universalist Church, 1 Lawson Rd., Berkeley, 510-525-0302. UUCB.org.

YOGA & BODYWORK

Donation-Based Prenatal Yoga Mondays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Continues through Dec. 27. donation. Yoga Center, 1201 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-704-1330. YogaCenter.org.

InterPlay as a Life Practice Cynthia Winton-Henry and other InterPlay leaders lead an ongoing class in moving, breathing, vocalizing, and playing. Fridays, 10-11:30 a.m., $10-$25. InterPlay, 2273 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-465-2797. InterPlay.org.

Pay What You Can Community Yoga Saturdays, 11 a.m., $12.50 suggested donation. Kinetic Arts Center, 785 7th St., Oakland, 510-444-4890.

PICKS

Candlelight Christmas Service

A candlelight **Christmas service at St. John's Presbyterian Church** (2727 College Ave., Berkeley) on Friday, Dec. 24, focuses on reflecting, renewing, and seeking and finding the light. A progressive and peace-activist congregation, St. John's was founded in 1909 by survivors of the 1906 earthquake who had relocated to the East Bay. Its original building was designed by Julia Morgan and is now the Julia Morgan Theater, across the street from the church's much larger modern building. 5:30 p.m., free. StJohnsBerkeley.org. — *Anneli Rufus*

The Healing Power of Laughter

It's a fact recognized by scientists and spiritual folks alike: Any time of year, but especially in the cold, dark depths of winter, laughter lifts the spirits and strengthens the immune system. **At the Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists** (1606 Bonita St., Berkeley) on Sunday, Dec. 26, clinical psychologist and ministerial intern **Carrie Knowles**, who holds a master's degree in divinity, takes the pulpit and leads a service titled "**The Healing Power of Laughter**." Live music accompanies the service. 10:30 a.m., free. BFUU.org. — *A.R.*

Meditation Practice Week

In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the **Berkeley Shambhala Meditation Center** (2288 Fulton St., Berkeley) hosts a **Holiday Practice Week** beginning on Monday, Dec. 27. Each day is packed from morning until evening with Primordial Rigden Ngondro, Werma Sadhana, and shamatha practice as well as meditation instruction, readings, and discussion. The week's events are open to newcomers as well as seasoned Shambhala practitioners. 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., voluntary donation. BerkeleyShambhala.org. — *A.R.*

Kwanzaa Book Workshop

Just because Kwanzaa was invented in 1966 by a California State University professor who spent time in jail for assault doesn't mean its seven principles of cooperation, collectivism, unity, self-determination, creativity, and faith aren't meaningful. At **the Berkeley Public Library's Central Branch** (2090 Kittredge St., Berkeley) on Tuesday, Dec. 28, a **Kwanzaa Book Workshop** gives the whole family a chance to honor these principles. Bring photos or other memorabilia to include in your book. Other materials will be supplied. 11:15 a.m., free. BerkeleyPublicLibrary.org. — *A.R.*

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AQUARIUM AGE

JOYFUL NOISE

For the week of December 22-28, 2010

By Rallee Finn

This Christmas, whether it's on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, the conversation around the feasting table is likely to be highly unusual. In Woo-Woo World (where I live), New Age families are likely to be talking about the Mayan factor and the end of time (after all, we're only two years away from the target date of December 21, 2012). The end of the world could also be a topic of conversation in more traditional households, especially given the political mess we're in, as well as the current state of the economy. Some communities have already recognized what happens when you combine prophecy and politics — "Palin 2012: 10,000 Mayans Can't Be Wrong." (My favorite bumper sticker, spotted in Santa Fe by a friend, and, yes, I am still working on that learning-to-love-the-Republicans thing.) Wherever you find yourself along this spectrum of strange, you can be certain someone will up the ante from odd to odder. So leave your judgments at the door (or if you're hosting, tuck them neatly under the carpet), and simply allow yourself to be amused. Remember, 'tis the season to be jolly.

Several sources contribute to the week's preoccupation with fringe realities. First, we are in the throes of a lunar eclipse that occurred on Tuesday, December 21, at the last degree of the *Gemini/Sagittarius axis*. Both Gemini and its complement Sagittarius love (and I mean *love*) to talk, and sometimes they love to talk so much, they just prattle on about any ol' thing. But because eclipses tend to reveal previously hidden information, this eclipse has the potential to unfold as a series of personal Wikileaks. (It makes no difference that this eclipse happened yesterday: eclipses tend to have an effect six weeks before or six weeks after the actual event.) And this eclipse could motivate otherwise quiet and contained individuals to reveal astonishing information about Ayahuasca rituals they have experienced in the Peruvian rainforest.

Second, Mercury is still retrograde, and while its square to the Jupiter/Uranus conjunction is waning, I'm thinking it still carries some clout. When Mercury stimulates a Jupiter/Uranus conjunction (which is already weird and wonderful), all variety of information is suddenly "shared." Mercury is also in a sextile to Neptune, a dreamy combination that has the potential to turn certain dialogues poetic. Neptune signifies imagination, Mercury symbolizes language. And when they work together, minds are able to reach beyond the confines of mundane reality. Writers, keep pen and paper handy: This sextile inspires storytelling.

Two difficult interactions could interfere with the festivities and turn upbeat conversations dour. All week long, we are moving into a Mars/Saturn square, a difficult interaction, with a bent toward severity that's bound to empower hoh-humming attitudes. We are also in the midst of a Sun/Pluto conjunction, another hard configuration that feeds the need to control *everything*. This means you or someone you love might not be able to refrain from putting a foot down on subject matter that strays just a bit too far from what he or she would like Christmas to be. Remember, this year's holiday mantra is "non-judgment."

As we approach the end of a gruelingly intense year, you may find yourself reviewing significant moments. Apply the same notion of non-judgment to this retrospective, and as you do, please be kind to yourself and to others.

If you know your Ascendant and/or your Moon Sign, read that, too.

ARIES The entire picture will reveal itself in time. So make patience your constant companion, and continue to take a day-by-day approach to life.

TAURUS The eccentricity of the holiday spirit actually agrees with you. Give yourself permission to *swap* those reindeer antlers for your ET antennae, and have a wacky little weekend.

GEMINI Partners of every denomination may be surprised by your declarations of personal independence. Don't let their reaction deter you from establishing healthy boundaries.

CANCER Rather than insist on a specific outcome, surrender your need to control and simply allow the situation to unfold. It won't be easy to let go, but the benefits might surprise you.

LEO You won't be able to refrain from sharing your opinion on every subject. So surrender to the inevitable and rely on your innate generosity of spirit to soothe any feathers that get ruffled by your enthusiasms.

VIRGO *Refuse* to be bitten by the "bah-humbug" ghost of Christmas disappointment and instead focus on activities that will boost your joy and feed your creativity.

LIBRA Of course you're revisiting family issues. 'Tis the season to review and take stock, so as you contemplate your situation, remember to also examine your participation.

SCORPIO Pretend you are guest-starring on *Glee*, and then express your feelings by singing loud and proud. Don't worry about making "noise" — music is always about authenticity.

SAGITTARIUS Give your inner poet permission to hold forth — and then witness what happens when your natural loquaciousness meets your innate creativity.

CAPRICORN Take advantage of this year's unconventional holiday spirit, and instead of doing what's expected because it's expected, be true to yourself and celebrate the way you want to — even if it's completely traditional.

AQUARIUS If you are having a holiday dilemma, here's the antidote: Just be you. All you, all the time. After all, you are the very essence of spontaneous, original, free-spirited self-expression.

PISCES The emotional intensity of the season persists, but that doesn't mean you need to be overwhelmed. Keep your priorities clear, only participate in activities that bring you joy, and don't hesitate to hide under the covers when necessary. ●

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For More Info

Rallee Finn specializes in Transformational Astrology. For readings, call 1-888-937-9264, write P.O. Box 343, New York, NY 10025, visit AquariumAge.com, or e-mail Rallee@AquariumAge.com. Copyright © 2010 by Rallee Finn

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Question #3 Why are forests considered "carbon sinks"?

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Question #4 How many pounds do I weigh?

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Question #5 What causes the LIMPET power plant's turbine to spin?

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Question #6 What type of windows help keep your home cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter?

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FOOD & DRINK

The mai tai wave offers three miniature versions of the world-famous rum drink. Stephen Loewinsohn

TRADING UP

Emeryville's legendary island oasis Trader Vic's reemerges after an extensive five-month renovation

By Matthew Stafford

Back in 1932, a wayfarer and raconteur named **Victor Bergeron, Jr.** opened a saloon on San Pablo Avenue where he served snazzy tropical cocktails and Americanized island grub among an extensive collection of South Seas paraphernalia. By 1938 a young Herb Caen was writing that "the best restaurant in San Francisco is in Oakland," and the rest is history: cookbooks, an empire of chain eateries, home-kitchen accessories, and a flattering deluge of imitations (from **Trad'r Sam's** and the **Tonga Room** to **Forbidden Island** and the recently reinvented **Tiki Tom's**) — all marked by that surefire Jungle Cruise mash-up of Polynesian kitsch, sweet and sour pork, and sneakily potent tropical cocktails.

The **Trader Vic's** empire's flagship restaurant is still here in the East Bay, although it's been located in a rambling, memorabilia-bedecked expanse at the Emeryville Marina since 1972. The last time we headed out there a decade ago, the tables gleamed with napery and silver, the service was just this side of snooty, the ceilings and walls dripped with antique firearms and stuffed alligators, and the food was as overcooked, heavily textured, and inoffensively "exotic" as any preserved-in-aspic relic of the Eisenhower era. But in April of this year, the place closed down for an extensive five-month renovation and reinterpretation. The result is a more casual, economy-savvy new-millennium rendezvous with enough of that old special-occasion tropical-staycation Trader Vic's ambience to inspire a fun and celebratory holiday getaway.

Just past the totem-guarded vestibule and the gardenia-coiffed hostess is an expanded bar and lounge with enhanced views of the marina. The ceilings are draped in Bac Bac matting, while the bamboo-edged walls are covered with vibrant brown and black Polynesian tapa cloth accented with vintage chalk drawings of Tortuga island maidens. The bar itself (recently imported from the chain's Osaka branch) is thick lacquered koa wood illuminated with light fixtures that allegedly date back to Vic's original San Pablo Avenue watering hole. The overall effect is languid, inviting, and island-y, especially after one of the gorgeously reconceived cocktails that are the best part of an evening at Vic's.

Primary among them is the mai tai, that world-renowned concoction of rum, lime juice, Curaçao, orgeat, shaved ice, and fresh mint that was invented a few miles from here by Vic himself back in 1944. We sampled five different varieties of the drink and enjoyed the sweet, potent original version the most; the updated version was light and refreshing but lacked 1944's warrior's wallop. You can also get a flight of three miniature mai tais attractively presented on a lacquered surfboard, tiny umbrellas and all: a pleasantly dry guava, a sweet and musky mango, and a pineapple version that tasted like Hawaiian Punch.

Another classic, hot buttered rum served in a leering ceramic skull, was strong, sweet and soul-warming — a perfect cocktail for the winter solstice. Although the Samoan Fog Cutter was powered with rum, gin, sherry, and brandy it was fruity, floral, and not aggressively boozy. The Hom Honu — spiced bourbon on ice — was tasty enough, but the best thing about it was its surprisingly racy chinaware vessel depicting the courtship rituals of some unnamed isle. By the time we got around to the house grog, the rum-fruit juice equation was attaining a certain sameness, but the Bahia was something special: light rum, pineapple, and coconut served over shaved ice, like a grownup sno-cone, and wonderfully refreshing.

The dining room resembles a well-appointed South Seas schooner, with canoes and crab traps hanging from the ceiling, gleaming koa wood tables, tribal masks from New Guinea, a seashell chandelier, the occasional palm frond, and an impressive lineup of life-size tiki gods. Here we sampled the second best part of the Trader Vic's experience: the appetizers. The Cheese Tings, a longtime favorite, were like tiny deep-fried ham and cheese sandwiches: crunchy on the outside, volcanically gooey within. Irresistible. The Cosmo Tidbits is a compendium of the Trader's greatest hits — slices of tender, smoky barbecued pork from the venue's wood-fired Chinese oven; crisp, juicy, deep-fried jumbo prawns; rich, meaty little spareribs; the blissfully inauthentic crab Rangoon; crunchy pot stickers filled with cream cheese and crabmeat. Another classic, Bongo Bongo Soup, was a silky, smooth purée of creamed oysters and spinach with lots of rich briny flavor and a nice peppery afterbite.

For the most part, the entrées weren't as memorable as the drinks, starters, and surroundings. Despite top-drawer ingredients, the Beef 'n' Reef — wok-fried strips of tenderloin with shrimp, veggies, jasmine rice, and teriyaki sauce — tasted like something you would've ordered in Chinatown circa 1967. The cedar-planked salmon looked great, but despite its time in the smoky wood-fired oven the fish was dry and uninteresting and the artichokes and potatoes that shared the platter were forgettable. But the Indonesian lamb satay featured skewers of tender meat and onion and three dipping sauces, and the crispy duck, while unexciting, did have a nice fatty-tender texture and came with delicate mu shu pancakes, strips of cucumber and scallion, and a not too-sweet plum sauce.

Desserts included a dry and disappointing pineapple upside-down cake; a dense, almost fruitcake-like macadamia chocolate tart, packed with nuts and sticky chewy goodness; crisp little banana fritters drizzled with rum syrup; and our favorite, a big scoop of boozy rum ice cream studded with pecans and topped with a buttery praline sauce.

Although some of the menu items need more spice or a lighter touch or a fresher approach, Trader Vic's continues to be one of those restaurants where the overall experience trumps the particulars. It's unlikely that you won't have a good time — especially now that you don't have to worry about spilling your mai tai on a starched tablecloth. ●

To share this story, type: sfba.ly.pe/tradervics

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Sample Menu

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[illegible] 1619 Webster St., Alameda, 510-521-9090 (Mexican) $
Scolari's Good Eats 1303 Park St., Alameda, 510-521-2400 (American/Italian/Eclectic/Salads) $$
Speisekammer 2424 Lincoln Ave., Alameda, 510-522-1300 (German/Western) $$
Sushi King 1856 Park St., Alameda, 510-523-8848 (Japanese/Sushi) $$

ALBANY, KENSINGTON & BERKELEY SOLANO

[illegible] on Solano 1613 Solano Ave., Albany, 510-528-1237 (California Cuisine/Tapas/Small Plates) $$$
[illegible] 1488 Solano Ave., Berkeley, 510-525-4373 (Italian/Pakistani/Organic/Sustainable) $$
[illegible] Big Burger 477 San Pablo Ave., Albany, 510-527-[illegible] (Diner) $
Barney's Gourmet Hamburgers 1591 Solano Ave., Berkeley, 510-526-8185 (American/Burgers/Sandwiches) $
[illegible] 1491 Solano Ave., Albany, 510-526-9889 (American/Southeast Asian/Cajun/Creole/Italian/Burgers/Sandwiches) $$
Bua 1847 Solano Ave., Berkeley (510) 526-8870 (Vietnamese) $$
Cactus Taqueria 1881 Solano Ave., Berkeley, 510-528-1881 (Mexican/Organic/Sustainable) $
[illegible] 1398 Solano Ave., Albany, 510-526-[illegible] (Breakfast/Brunch/Coffeehouses/Organic/Sustainable/Vegetarian/Vegan) $
[illegible] Thai 1350 Solano Ave., Albany, 510-528-3309, (Seafood) $$
Fonda 1501A Solano Ave., Berkeley, 510-559-9006 (Modern/Nuevo Latino/Organic/Sustainable/Bistro-American/Tapas/Small Plates) $$-$$$
The Hut Shop 900 San Pablo Ave., Albany 510-558-9719 (Mexican) $
Kathmandu 1491 Solano Ave., Albany, 510-526-3222 (Tibetan) $$
[illegible] 1300 Solano Ave., Berkeley, 510-525-2810 (Indian/Pakistani) $$
Meal Ticket 1235 San Pablo Ave., Albany, 510-526-6325 (American/Breakfast/Brunch/Organic/Restaurant) $-$$
Nizza la Bella 825-827 San Pablo Ave., Albany 510-526-2552 (French/Italian) $$$
[illegible] 1491 Solano Ave., Albany, 510-527-4111 (Asian) $$
[illegible] 1477 Solano Ave., Albany, 510-524-3310 (Chinese) $$
Taqueria Talavera 1561 Solano Ave., Berkeley, 510-528-8565 (Mexican) $
[illegible] 1715 Solano Ave., Berkeley, 510-525-8200 (Tapas/Small Plates/Restaurant) $$
Zachary's Chicago Pizza 1853 Solano Ave., Berkeley, 510-525-5950 (Pizza) $-$$
Zabi Kabob House 1135 San Pablo Ave., Albany, [illegible] (Middle Eastern) $

ANTIOCH, PITTSBURG & BRENTWOOD

Kinder's Custom Meats 5455 Lone Tree Way #331, Brentwood, 925-308-7957 (Barbecue/Deli) $
[illegible] 5931 Lone Tree Way, Brentwood, 925-634-6288 (Barbecue/Hawaiian) $
Mac's Old House 3100 E. 18th St., Antioch, 925-757-0948 (American/Italian/Seafood/Steak House) $-$$

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BERKELEY-DOWNTOWN

[illegible] 2142 Center St., Berkeley 510-848-8811 (Nuevo Latino/Peruvian) $$
[illegible] 2175 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-665-1000 (Organic/Ice Cream) $
Amanda's Feel Good Fresh Food 2122 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-548-2122 (American/Vegetarian/Vegan) $
Andy and Cindy's Thai Cuisine Saturday Farmers Market, Berkeley, 510-[illegible] (Organic/Sustainable/Thai/Burmese/Vegetarian/Vegan) $
[illegible] Mediterranean 2375 [illegible] Way, Berkeley, 510-704-1715 (Middle Eastern) $$
Bangkok Thai Balloon 1458 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-848-0485 (Thai/Burmese) $
Biryani House 2011 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-845-[illegible] (Indian/Pakistani) $
[illegible] 2064 Center St., Berkeley, 510-704-8400 (Shattuck) $
[illegible] Cafe 1997 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-845-4431 (Indian/Pakistani/Tapas/Small Plates) $
The Restaurant 2435 Shattuck St., Berkeley, 510-843-8373 (Eclectic/Exotic) $
[illegible] Thai 2333 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-548-9644 (Deli) $
[illegible] Center Street at Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley, (Mexican/Vegetarian/Vegan) $
[illegible] 2200 [illegible] St., Berkeley, 510-808-0400 (Organic/Sustainable/American) $$
Gelateria Naia 2136 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-883-3566 (Dessert/Ice Cream) $
[illegible] 2136 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-845-8858 (Thai/Burmese/Vegetarian/Vegan) $
[illegible] 2239 Allston Way, Berkeley, 510-548-5282 (Deli) $
[illegible] [illegible] Center St., Berkeley, 510-665-9000 (Japanese/Sushi/Tapas/Small Plates/Organic/Sustainable/Wine Bar) $$$
Looney's Smokehouse 2400 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, 510-649-0855 (Barbecue) $-$$
[illegible] Lounge 2230 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-644-2982 (American) $
The Mayflower 2158 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-583-9788 (Chinese) $
[illegible] International Sports Cafe 2086 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-[illegible]-1450 (American/Brewpub) $$
[illegible] 98 Shattuck Sq., Berkeley, 510-549-1300 (Italian/Pizza) $
Platano 2042 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-704-8838 (Central American) $-$$
[illegible] 1923 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-840-2148 (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $$
Pomegranate 1585 University Ave., Berkeley 510-665-5567 (Italian/Middle Eastern) $$
[illegible] Organic [illegible] 2118 [illegible] St., Berkeley, 510-486-8440 (Middle Eastern/Organic/Sustainable/Vegetarian/Vegan) $
[illegible] Cafe 2175 [illegible] Way, Berkeley, 510-845-8500 (Shattuck) $$
Slow 1966 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-647-3663 (American) $-$$
Tin Tin Thai Cafe 2450-2468 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-548-8398 (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $-$$
Yogurt Harmony 2158 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-848-5800 (Dessert/Ice Cream) $
Zabu Zabu 1919 Addison St., Berkeley, 510-848-9228 (Japanese/Sushi) $$$

BERKELEY-NORTH

Barney's Gourmet Hamburgers 1600 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-849-2827 (American/Burgers/Sandwiches) $
Cafe Gratitude 1730 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 415-824-4652 ext. 3 (Organic/Sustainable/Vegetarian/Vegan) $$
[illegible] Restaurant [illegible] Euclid Ave., Berkeley, 510-549-5480 (Mexican) $-$$
César 1515 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-883-0222, (Spanish/Tapas/Small Plates) $$
[illegible] 1543 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-848-9964 (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $-$$
The Cheese Board Pizza Collective 1512 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-549-3055 (Bakery/Organic/Sustainable/Pizza) $
Chez Panisse 1517 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-548-5525 restaurant/510-548-5049

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RECENTLY REVIEWED

Giovanni Restaurant
2420 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-843-6678. Serving classic Italian fare in the same comfort able, earth-toned, softly glowing space since 1961, Giovanni is one of the last still-standing Berkeley restaurants enlivening the child hood memories of local folks aged fifty-plus. The ravioli is still made in the exact same way by the exact same hands, since chef Juan Sanchez has been doing it for forty years. Original owner Giovanni Schipani sold the place in 1989 then bought it back in 2000, now it's a family outfit again. Pasta, pizza, sandwiches, and other favorites — the Italian standbys that are programmed into the sensory hard drive of most anyone who grew up in Europe or North America — are served in generous portions, with fabulous soft-centered, steaming-hot, herb-speckled, house-made focaccia on the side. If you know what's good for you, order the tiramisu. $$

Scolari's Good Eats
2301 Pacific St., Alameda, 510-521-2471. A downtown Alameda tavern houses the sustainable-foodie creed as the gourmet-market, cafe and grocery-store deli counters that have blossomed since the economy nosedived. The cuisine is classic American fast food — burgers, hot dogs, breakfast sandwiches — but the ingredients are seasonal and organic, the execution is imaginative and satisfying, and the daily specials include such delights as Dungeness crab with garlic butter and split pea soup with crispy pork belly and a New Jersey strom-boli stuffed up with pumpkin leek, and cashews. The cheerful, shoe-box-sized space has six stools and a few sidewalk tables, or enjoy your takeout at the Lucky 13 saloon next door. $$

No Worries
4422 Telegraph St., Oakland, 510-444-4466. One hundred percent vegan Filipino food, such as that served at No Worries, is highly anomalous, a Star Trek version of a cuisine that in its natural habitat is about 95 percent meat. Thus No Worries' soy-pork menudo and soy-beef burrito might disconcert those who have been fully immersed in the real Pinoy McCoy. Born in the Philippines but raised in Oakland, chef/owner Jay-Ar Ingemi Pugao creates meatless versions of dishes his mother used to make: *sinigang*, *sisig*, *pancit*, *lumpia*, *kare-kare*, and more. Served in a hip but off-puttingly cavernous setting, these entrées are homey, filling, remarkably un-greasy, and most are rich in fake meat manufactured by world-class flesh-prefabricator Layonna. $

Plum
2214 Broadway, Oakland, 510-444-7586. Star chef Daniel Patterson's more casual, scaled-down neighborhood version of San Francisco's Coi serves up farm-fresh ingredients in unusual California-fusion combinations: deviled eggs with tayberry-tarragon relish, oyster stew with parsley root and wheatgrass, braised cauliflower with dandelion salsa verde. The execution doesn't always live up to the high concept, but the beef cheek/oxtail burger is sensational, the artichoke/chervil terrine is lush and delectable, and the white chocolate parfait with huckleberries is a dream. Strikingly dark, sleek setting. Impressive wine list. $$$

Zaki Kabob House
1101 San Pablo Ave., Albany, 510-527-5452. The Ayyad family operated delis around the Bay Area for thirty years before opening Zaki Kabob House two years ago in a location that many locals considered "cursed." The Ayyads transformed it into a homey, cozy picture-lined setting where they serve Levantine classics such as shawarma, tabouleh, kibbeh, and, of course, kabobs. The house specialty is rotisserie chicken, whose spice rub and marinade are closely held secrets of owner Ramsey Ayyad's Palestinian mother. Vegans can choose from a wide range of selections; standouts include fava-bean salad, falafel burgers, baba ghanouj, and Lebanese lentil rice *mujaddara*. $

Nex
4441 Webster St., Oakland, 510-238-8024. Hi-Suk Dong's downtown hangout serves satisfying, inventive French-Italian-American comfort food in a sexy, artsy setting. Gooey marrow bones and green beans with egg, bacon, and Green Goddess dressing are among the delectable starters; the moist, soup-marinated brick chicken is already a local must-have. There are thin-crusted, wood-fired pizzas, too, plus funnel cake fries and a rich, bittersweet chocolate pot de crème for dessert. Eclectic, impressive wine list. $$$

eats. (California Cuisine/French/Italian/Organic/Sustainable) $$$-$$$$

Gioccolato Di Vino 1901 Shattuck Ave., Suite C, Berkeley, 510-898-1300. (Italian/Dessert/Ice Cream/Wine Bar) $$

Gu Lien 1674 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-883-8833. (Chinese/Dessert/Ice Cream) $

Mariel North Berkeley Farmers' Market, Berkeley. (Mexican/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

Gregoire 2109 Cedar St., Berkeley, 510-883-1893. (French/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

Meritage 41 Lorelli St., Berkeley, 510-549-3510. (American)

Northside Cafe 1878 Euclid Ave., Berkeley, 510-845-3663. (American) $

Philz Coffee 1600 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-705-8085. (Coffeehouses) $

Mario's Taqueria 1581 B Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-540-4981. (Mexican) $

Saul's Restaurant and Delicatessen 1475 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-848-3354. (Deli/Kosher/Halal/Organic/Sustainable) $$

BERKELEY-SOUTH

Adagia 2700 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, 510-647-2300. (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$$

Andy and Cindy's Thai Cuisine Tuesday Berkeley Farmers' Market, Berkeley, 510-548-3333. (Organic/Sustainable/Thai/Barbecue/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

Cuisine of India 2448 Sacramento St., Berkeley, 510-848-7884. (Indian/Pakistani/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

Cafe Mano 2625 Durant Ave., Berkeley, 510-548-4350. (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

Cafe Valparaiso 1403 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-849-3888. (South American) $$

La Casita 2975 College Ave., Berkeley, 510-704-8102. (Mexican) $

Crixa Cakes 2748 Adeline St., Berkeley, 510-548-0421. (Bakery/Coffeehouses) $-$$

Flavors of India 2801 College Ave., Berkeley, 510-658-3470. (Indian/Pakistani) $$

Finfine 2556 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, 510-883-0477. (Ethiopian/Eritrean) $$

Flacos Berkeley Tuesday Farmer's Market, Berkeley. (Mexican/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

Holy Land 2965 College Ave., Berkeley, 510-665-1672. (Middle Eastern) $

Homemade Cafe 2454 Sacramento St., Berkeley, 510-845-1940. (American/Breakfast/Brunch/Diner) $

Kirala 2100 Ward St., Berkeley, 510-549-3486. (Japanese/Sushi) $$

Manpuku 2977 College Ave., Berkeley, 510-848-2530. (Japanese/Sushi) $-$$

Mezze 2985 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, 510-356-9090. (Greek/Turkish/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

Mehfil Indian Cuisine 2480 Sacramento St., Berkeley, 510-841-0110. (Indian/Pakistani) $

Norikonoko 2556 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, 510-548-1274. (Japanese/Sushi) $$-$$$

The Vault 3250 Adeline St., Berkeley, 510-595-4500. (American/Breakfast/Brunch/California Cuisine/Coffeehouses) $-$$

Wat Mongkolratanaram 1911 Russell St., Berkeley, 510-849-3419. (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $

BERKELEY-WEST & EMERYVILLE

900 Grayson 900 Grayson St., Berkeley, 510-704-9900. (California Berkeley) $$

Anchalee 1094 Dwight Way, Berkeley, 510-848-4015. (Thai/Burmese) $$

Arizmendi Bakery and Pizzeria 4301 San Pablo Ave., Emeryville, 510-547-0550. (Bakery/Pizza/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

Bette's Oceanview Diner 1807 Fourth St., Berkeley, 510-644-3230. (American/Diner/Organic/Sustainable) $$

Cafe M 1798 Fourth St., Berkeley, 510-526-4420. (American/Breakfast/Brunch) $$

Lupitas Petiana 1320 65th St., Emeryville, 510-923-0497. (Mexican) $$

Digs Bistro 1453 Dwight Way, Berkeley, 510-548-2322. (American/California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$

Doyle Street Cafe 5515 Doyle St., Emeryville, 510-547-2352. (Breakfast/Brunch/Diner) $

Everett & Jones Barbeque 1955 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-548-8261. (Barbecue) $$

India Kabob and Sweets 874 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-704-1298. (Bakery/Indian/Pakistani) $

Jimmy Bean's 1290 Sixth St., Berkeley, 510-528-3435. (Breakfast/Brunch/California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

Kabana 1106 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-845-3356. (Indian/Pakistani/Afghan/Halal) $

JJ's Bar-B-Que 2613 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-548-1140. (Barbecue) $-$$

Lanesplitter Pizza and Pub 3645 San Pablo Ave., Emeryville, 510-594-9400. (Pizza) $

Lois the Pie Queen 851 60th St., Emeryville, 510-658-5616. (American/Breakfast/Brunch/Southern/Soul Food) $-$$

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[illegible] 1328 Sixth St., Berkeley 510-525-2021 (Mexican/Organic/Sustainable) $

Priya [illegible] Indian 2072 San Pablo Ave Oakland, 510-644-2077 (Indian/Pakistani) $-$$

Rudy's Can't Fail Cafe 4081 Hollis St., Emeryville, 510-594-1221 (American/Diner) $-$$

Sea Breeze Market and Deli 598 University Ave., Berkeley 510-486-8802 (Deli/Seafood) $

Spenger's Fresh Fish Grotto 1919 Fourth St., Berkeley 510-845-7771 (Seafood) $$$

Trader Vic's 9 Anchor Dr., Emeryville, 510-653-3400 (Asian Fusion/American/Caribbean/Hawaiian/Seafood) $$$-$$$$

Vik's 2390 Fourth St., Berkeley 510-644-4432 (Indian/Pakistani/Tapas/Street Food) $

Zut! 1820 Fourth St., Berkeley, 510-644-0444 (Greek/Turkish/California Cuisine/French/Italian/Moroccan/Organic/Sustainable/Prix-fixe) $$$

CONCORD, MARTINEZ & PLEASANT HILL

Bistro [illegible] 4375C Clayton Rd., Concord, 925-680-7728 (Peruvian/South American) $$

[illegible] House 1801 [illegible] St., Concord, 925-825-3277 (Eastern European/German/American) $$

[illegible] Brewery [illegible] 2150 Salvio St. Suite L Concord, 925-681-4253 (American/Brewpub) $-$$

[illegible] 153 Morello Ave Pleasant Hill, 925-677-0337 (African) $$

[illegible] 2227 [illegible] Ave., Pleasant Hill, 925-798-2033 (Barbecue/Deli) $

[illegible] 1820 [illegible] Industrial Way Oakland, 925-825-8002 (American/Deli) $

L&L Hawaiian Barbecue 801 Concord Ave., Pleasant Hill (925) 691-2651 (Barbecue/Hawaiian) $

La Piñata 2366 Monument Blvd Concord, 925-609-9100 (Mexican) $$

[illegible] 2116 Monument Blvd 1008 Concord, 925-691-4080 (Italian) $$-$$$

[illegible] 2118 Mount Diablo St. Concord 925-691-8008 (Mexican/Organic/Sustainable) $$

Industrial Eatery & Wine Bar 1850 San Pablo Blvd Pleasant Hill, 925-944-0402 (Tapas/Small Plates/Wine Bar) $$-$$$

[illegible] 755 Oak Grove Concord 925-[illegible] (Mexican) $

Taqueria Los Pericos 2989 Monument Blvd Suite 5 Concord 925-682-7530 (Mexican) $

[illegible] 2451 Grand St., San [illegible], 925-521-8668 (Italian) $$-$$$

EL CERRITO, RICHMOND & NORTH

[illegible] 10590 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, 510-526-8955 (Mexican) $

[illegible] 3748 San Pablo Dam Rd El Sobrante, 510-222-8007 (Italian/Peruvian/South American) $$

[illegible] Hot Pot City 3288 Pierce St., Richmond, 510-528-6081 (Chinese) $-$$

[illegible] Restaurant 3288A Pierce St., Richmond 510-527-3888 (Chinese/Seafood) $-$$$

The Dead Fish 20050 San Pablo Ave Crockett, 510-787-3323 (American/Seafood) $$$-$$$$

[illegible] 109 Park Pl., Richmond 510-899-6765 (American/California Cuisine) $$

[illegible] 11450 San Pablo Ave. El Cerrito 510-524-9288 (Chinese/Taiwanese) $

The Junket 235 El Cerrito Plaza El Cerrito, 510-524-4022 (Deli/Grocery/American/Coffeehouses) $

[illegible] 5803 San Pablo Dam Rd. El Sobrante, 510-223-8819 (Central American) $

[illegible] 10544 San Pablo Ave. El Cerrito 510-526-1074 (Japanese/Sushi) $-$$

[illegible] 3400 San Pablo Ave Suite 1 Hercules, 510-724-2332 (Taiwanese/Thai) $

Little [illegible] 4115 [illegible] Ave., El Cerrito, 510-732-8979 (Steak House) $$-$$$

[illegible] 1550 Esplanade Dr. Pinole 510-724-5020 (Italian) $$

[illegible] Thai Restaurant 12200 San Pablo Ave Richmond 510-236-5548 (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $-$$

[illegible] 684 Sycamore Ave Unit B, Hercules 510-245-1800 (Japanese/Sushi) $$

El [illegible] 14601 San Pablo Ave., San Pablo, 510-215-7083 (Central American/Salvadoran) $

[illegible] Thai 644 Willow Ave Rodeo 510-799-8900 (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $$

FREMONT NEWARK & UNION CITY

[illegible] 40095 Warm Springs Blvd Fremont 510-656-8802 (Vegetarian) $$-$$$

Kabob Cafe 3654 Mowry Ave., Fremont, 510-796-3400 (Indian/Pakistani/Tapas/Street Food) $-$$

[illegible] 33350 Alvarado-Niles Rd., Union City, 510-471-0357 (Indian/Pakistani) $-$$

De Afghanan Kabob House 37405 Fremont Blvd. Fremont, 510-745-9599 (Afghan/Middle Eastern) $-$$

[illegible] Chicken House 43181 Mission Blvd., Fremont 510-440-1513 (Belgian/Barbecue/Deli) $

L&L Hawaiian Barbecue 1858 Decoto Rd., Union City (510) 324-8836 (Barbecue/Hawaiian) $

Little [illegible] Express 34420-G Fremont Blvd Fremont, 510-886-1588 (Chinese) $

[illegible] Hot Pot Restaurant 6006 Mowry Ave Newark, 510-792-3988 (Chinese) $$

Woodlands 39203 Cedar Blvd Newark 510-494-9727 (Indian/Pakistani) $

HAYWARD & SAN LEANDRO

A [illegible] Cafe 1213 A St., Hayward 510-582-2588 (French) $$$

[illegible] 20630 Mission Blvd Hayward 510-278-7355 (Italian) $$

Buffalo Bill's Brewery 1082 B St. Hayward, 510-886-9823 (American/Brewpub) $

[illegible] 881 A St., Hayward, 510-727-0130 (Asian) $$

[illegible] 1709 MacArthur Blvd., San Leandro, 510-895-8888 (Asian Fusion/Tapas/Small Plates) $$$

[illegible] & Jim's Barbeque 2946 A Street Hayward 510-581-2222 (Barbeque) $$

[illegible] 25036 Hesperian Blvd Hayward 510-785-7143 (Chinese) $$

[illegible] Korean Bar-B-Q Restaurant 22365 Mission Blvd Hayward 510-886-[illegible] (Barbecue/Korean) $$

L&L Hawaiian Barbecue 27368 [illegible] Hayward 510-782-0800 (Barbecue/Hawaiian) $

La [illegible] 904 [illegible] St., Hayward 510-538-9967 (Mexican) $$

La [illegible] 2939 [illegible] St., San Leandro 510-352-8304 (Mexican) $$

[illegible] 21599 Hesperian Blvd Hayward 510-870-0727 (Filipino/Southeast Asian) $-$$

[illegible] Korean Restaurant 4207 [illegible] St. San Leandro, 510-588-4788 (Korean) $$-$$$

[illegible] Super Burger 16401 Hesperian Blvd. San Lorenzo, 510-276-8830 (American/Diner) $

[illegible] Fingers Jamaican Restaurant 494 E. 14th St. San Leandro, 510-533-9889 (Caribbean) $$

Thai [illegible] 1376 E. 14th St. San Leandro 510-[illegible] (Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $-$$

[illegible] 1427 E. 14th St., San Leandro, 510-357-3748 (Japanese/Sushi) $-$$

Val's Burgers 2185 Kelly St., Hayward, 510-889-8257 (American/Diner) $

[illegible] Restaurant 277 Pelton St., San Leandro 510-353-6600 (Vietnamese) $$

LAMORINDA

Bo's Barbecue 3422 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette 925-283-7133 (Barbecue/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

Casa Orinda 20 Bryant Way, Orinda, 925-254-2981 (American/Steak House) $$-$$$

Chow Lafayette 53 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette 925-962-2469 (American/California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$

El Jarro Mexican Cafe 3560 Mount Diablo Blvd. Lafayette, 925-283-6000 (Mexican) $$

[illegible] 100 Lafayette Circle Suite 101 Lafayette, 925-284-5282 (Italian) $$-$$$

[illegible] Restaurant 1 Orinda Way, Orinda 925-253-9852 (Chinese) $

[illegible] House 3550 Mount Diablo Blvd. Lafayette 925-284-7580 (Chinese) $$-$$$

Metro Lafayette 3524 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette 925-284-4422 (Asian Fusion/California Cuisine) $$-$

Pizza Antica 3600 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette 925-299-0500 (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable/Pizza) $$-$$$

Taqueria El [illegible] 3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette 925-284-8700 (Mexican) $

OAKLAND-DOWNTOWN & JACK LONDON SQ

B 499 9th St. Oakland, 510-251-8770 (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$

[illegible] 1630 Broadway, Oakland 510-251-2180 (Bakery/Coffeehouses) $-$$

Battambang Restaurant 850 Broadway, Oakland 510-839-8815 (Cambodian/Laotian/Seafood/Southeast Asian/Vegetarian/Vegan) $-$$

Bocanova 55 Webster St. Oakland, 510-444-1233 (California Cuisine/Caribbean/Central American/Nuevo Latino/Tapas/Small Plates) $$$

La Borinqueña Mexi-catessen 582 Seventh St., Oakland 510-444-8954 (Mexican) $-$$

Breads of India 948 Clay St., Oakland, 510-834-7684 (Indian/Pakistani) $-$$

Caffe [illegible] 1 [illegible] Broadway Lobby Level of [illegible], Oakland, 510-465-[illegible] (California Cuisine/Italian) $$-$$$

Cock-A-Doodle Cafe 719 Washington St. Oakland, 510-465-5400 (American/Breakfast/Brunch/Organic/Sustainable/California Cuisine/Home Cooking) $-$$

Encuentro 202 2nd St. Oakland, 510-832-9463 (Wine Bar/Tapas/Small Plates/Vegetarian/Vegan) $$

Everett & Jones Barbeque 126 Broadway, Oakland, 510-663-2350 (Barbeque) $$

Flora 1900 Telegraph Ave, Oakland, 510-286-0100 (California Cuisine) $$-$$$

La Furia Chalaca 310 Broadway Oakland 510-451-4206 (Peruvian/South American) $$$

Golden Lotus Vegetarian Restaurant 1301 Franklin St. Oakland 510-893-0383 (Chinese/Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese/Vegetarian/Vegan/Vietnamese) $

[illegible] Restaurant 704 Webster St. Oakland, 510-832-7981 (Chinese/Seafood) $-$$

[illegible] 349 Ninth St., Oakland, 510-[illegible] (Chinese) $

[illegible] 1745 San Pablo Ave Oakland 510-444-3836 (Caribbean/Organic/Sustainable) $$$

[illegible] 388 15th St., Oakland, 510-[illegible] (Barbecue) $$

[illegible] 412 15th St. Oakland, 510-452-[illegible] (Japanese/Sushi) $-$$$

Lake Chalet 1520 Lakeside Dr., Oakland 510-208-5253 (California Cuisine/Brunch/Burgers/Sandwiches/Italian/Seafood) $$$

Legendary Palace 708 Franklin St., Oakland 510-663-9188 (Chinese) $-$$

Levende East 827 Washington St., Oakland 510-835-5585 (California Cuisine) $$$

[illegible] 481 9th St. Oakland, 510-835-4[illegible] (Eclectic/Exotic/Tapas/Small Plates/Organic/Sustainable/Bars & Clubs) $$

[illegible] 2542 Webster St. Oakland, 510-[illegible] (American/Asian Fusion/Tapas/Small Plates/Bars & Clubs/Tapas Bars) $$-$$$

[illegible] 1900 3rd St. Oakland, 510-[illegible] (Southern/Soul Food) $$

[illegible] 2442 Webster St., Oakland, 510-238-8224 (French/Italian/[illegible]) $$$

Oyster Reef 1000 Embarcadero Ave. Oakland 510-836-2519 (Seafood) $$$

[illegible] 725 [illegible] St. Oakland, 510-[illegible] (Vietnamese) $

[illegible] Diner 400 15th St. Oakland, 510-444-8444 (American/Breakfast/Brunch/Diner/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

Shanghai Restaurant 930 Webster St. Oakland 510-465-6878 (Chinese) $-$$

Soizic 300 Broadway, Oakland, 510-251-8100 (California Cuisine) $$$

[illegible] 361 Broadway Oakland, 510-922-1315 (Southern/Soul Food/Vegetarian/Vegan) $$

Spice Monkey 1628 Webster St., Oakland, 510-268-0470 (California Cuisine) $$

Spices 3 369 12th St. Oakland, 510-625-8888 (Chinese) $$

Vo's Restaurant 88 Grand Ave. Oakland, 510-465-6888 (Vietnamese) $$

Yoshi's 510 Embarcadero West, Oakland, 510-238-9200 (Japanese/Sushi/Bars & Clubs/Performance Venues) $$$

OAKLAND-EAST

[illegible] Restaurant 1601 International Blvd Oakland, 510-444-2500 (Southeast Asian/Vietnamese) $

[illegible] Restaurant 3720 International Blvd Oakland 510-534-4793 (Mexican) $

[illegible] / 107 8th Ave., Oakland, 510-238-[illegible] (Cambodian/Laotian/Southeast Asian/Thai/Burmese) $

El [illegible] 4836 International Blvd., Oakland 510-[illegible] (Mexican) $-$$

[illegible] & [illegible] Barbeque 2618 Fruitvale Ave. Oakland, (510) 533-0900 (Barbeque) $$

Full House Cafe 3708 [illegible] Blvd Oakland, 510-480-2700 (American/Diner) $

El [illegible] 3847 International Blvd Oakland, 510-533-2395 (Mexican) $

La [illegible] Cafe 446 E. 18th St. Oakland, 510-465-7188 (Seafood/Sports Bars) $$

Pho Ao Sen 258 International Blvd Oakland, 510-839-8871 (Southeast Asian/Vietnamese) $

Pho [illegible] 20 International Blvd. Oakland, 510-451-8468 (Southeast Asian/Vietnamese) $

Tacos El Sol Corner of International Blvd and High St., Oakland, no phone (Mexican) $

Taqueria [illegible] 3668 Foothill Blvd. Oakland, 510-[illegible] (Mexican) $

Taqueria [illegible] 7135 International Blvd Oakland, 510-[illegible] (Mexican) $

OAKLAND-PIEDMONT, GRAND LAKE & EAST

[illegible] 4395 Piedmont Ave. Oakland, 510-601-0905 (Italian/Burgers/Sandwiches/Wine Bar) $$

[illegible] 3325 Grand Ave. Oakland, 510-444-2505 (Bars & Clubs/American/Burgers/Sandwiches/Steak House) $$

Andy and Cindy's Thai Cuisine Saturday Grand Lake Farmers' Market, Oakland, (415) 417-6401 (Organic/Sustainable/Thai/Burmese/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

Barney's Gourmet Hamburgers 4162 Piedmont Ave. Oakland, 510-655-7180 (American/Burgers/Sandwiches) $

Bellanico 4238 Park Blvd. Oakland, 510-336-1180 (Italian/Breakfast/Brunch/Organic/Sustainable/Wine Bar) $$

Blackberry Bistro 4240 Park Blvd. Oakland, 510-336-1088 (Breakfast/Brunch/Southern/Soul Food) $-$$

[illegible] 4038 Piedmont Ave. Oakland, 510-[illegible] (Asian American/Japanese/Small Plates) $$

[illegible] 4175 Piedmont Ave. Oakland, 510-655-[illegible] (French) $$

[illegible] 3258 Piedmont Ave. Oakland, 510-653-3902 (California Cuisine/Eclectic/Exotic/Organic/Sustainable) $$$

Di [illegible] 3308 Grand Ave. Oakland, 510-451-0578 (California Cuisine) $$$-$$$$

[illegible] 3915 Piedmont Ave. Oakland, 510-[illegible] (Japanese/Sushi) $$

[illegible] 3112 La Salle Ave., Suite 3 Oakland, 510-[illegible] (Italian/Pakistani) $

[illegible] of India 3270 Lakeshore Ave. Oakland 510-[illegible] (Indian/Pakistani) $$

Grégoire 4001B Piedmont Ave. Oakland, 510-547-3444 (French) $-$$

Holy Land 677 Rand Ave. Oakland, 510-272-0535 (Kosher/Halal/Middle Eastern) $

Jong Ga House 372 Grand Ave. Oakland, 510-444-7658 (Korean) $$

[illegible] 4270 Piedmont Ave. Oakland, 510-652-[illegible] (Italian/Pizza) $$

[illegible] 3407 Lakeshore Ave. Oakland, 510-663-2500 (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$-$$$

[illegible] 3390 Grand Ave. Oakland, 510-465-8854 (Japanese/Sushi) $$

Prime Spot Bar & Grill 3407 Grand Ave. Oakland 510-[illegible] (Steak House) $$$

[illegible] 642 Grand Ave. Oakland, 510-452-3501 (American) $$-$$$

Zza's Trattoria 552 Grand Ave. Oakland, 510-839-9124 (Italian/Pizza) $$

OAKLAND-ROCKRIDGE

À Côté 5478 College Ave. Oakland 510-655-6469 (California Cuisine/French/Italian/Organic/Sustainable/Spanish/Tapas/Small Plates) $$$

Barney's Gourmet Hamburgers 5819 College Ave. Oakland 510-601-0444 (American/Burgers/Sandwiches) $

Cactus Taqueria 5642 College Ave. Oakland, 510-658-6180 (Mexican/Organic/Sustainable) $

Commonwealth Cafe and Pub 2882 Telegraph Ave. Oakland, 510-663-3000 (English/Irish/Sports Bars/Coffeehouses) $

[illegible] 5356 College Ave. Oakland, 510-595-4000 (California Cuisine/Tapas/Small Plates) $$$

[illegible] 5431 College Ave. Oakland, 510-655-4400 (Italian/Middle Eastern) $$

[illegible] 5319 College Ave. Oakland, 510-658-2291 (Indian/Pakistani) $$

Lake Anza Wildcat Canyon and Grizzly Peak Roads, Berkeley, 888-327-2757 (Parks/Burgers/Sandwiches/Coffeehouses/Deli/Desserts/Ice Cream) $

[illegible] 4081 Linden St. Oakland, 510-655-8380 (Vegetarian/Vegan) $

Oliveto 5655 College Ave. Oakland, 510-547-5356 (Italian/Organic/Sustainable) $$-$$$

Oliveto Cafe 5655 College Ave. Oakland, 510-547-5356 (Italian/Coffeehouses) $$$

[illegible] 5422 College Ave. Oakland 510-654-3811 (Italian/Pizza) $-$$

Zachary's Chicago Pizza 5801 College Ave. Oakland, 510-655-6385 (Pizza) $-$$

OAKLAND-TEMESCAL

[illegible] Restaurant 5020 Telegraph Ave. Oakland, 510-653-3450 (African/Ethiopian/Eritrean) $$

Andy and Cindy's Thai Cuisine Sunday Temescal Farmers' Market, Oakland, (415) 412-6180 (Organic/Sustainable/Thai/Burmese

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CULINARY & WINE

Oakland Locavore Wine Club Market [illegible] local vendors and [illegible] wines, along with a [illegible] Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m., $20. [illegible] Wine Club Studio, 2617 [illegible] St., Suite A, Berkeley.

FARMERS' MARKETS

Alameda Farmers' Market For info, visit PCFMA.com. Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., free. Webster St. (at Haight Ave.), Alameda.

Bayfair Mall Farmers' Market Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. Bayfair Center, 15555 E. 14th St., San Leandro. 510-357-6000, [illegible].

Berkeley Market Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Berkeley Adult School, 1700 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley.

Fremont Farmers' Market Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. [illegible] Willow Pass Rd. and Grant St., Concord. 925-671-3464.

Danville Certified Farmers' Market Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. Railroad Ave. at Prospect St., Danville.

Farm Fresh Choice [illegible] Wednesdays, 3-6:30 p.m. 510-848-4110. [illegible] Community Center, San Pablo Park, 2800 Park St., Berkeley. 510-981-6150. [illegible]

Grand Lake Farmers' Market Saturdays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Splash Pad Park, Grand Ave. and Lakepark, Oakland. 510-745-7275. OaklandNet.com/Parks/Parks/Splash.asp.

Irvington Farmers' Market Sundays, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. Bay St. at Fremont Blvd., Fremont.

Kaiser Permanente Oakland Farmers' Market Located in the courtyard [illegible] the main hospital. Thursdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Kaiser Fremont, 39400 Paseo Padre Pkwy., Fremont.

Kaiser Permanente Hayward Farmers' Market At the main entrance to the hospital. Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Kaiser Hayward, 27400 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward.

Kaiser Permanente Martinez Farmers' Market Thursdays, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Kaiser Permanente Martinez Medical Offices, 200 Muir Rd., Martinez.

Kaiser Permanente Oakland Farmers' Market Fridays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Kaiser Oakland, 3801 Howe St., Oakland.

Kaiser Permanente Union City Farmers' Market Sundays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Kaiser Medical Center, Union City, 3553 Whipple Rd., Union City.

Kaiser Permanente Walnut Creek Farmers' Market In the outdoor patio. [illegible] 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Kaiser Walnut Creek, 1425 South Main St., Walnut Creek.

Kensington Farmers' Market Sundays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. [illegible] Circle at the Colusa Circle, Kensington.

Laurel Market Farmers' Market Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Laurel Farmers' Market, 4113 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland.

North Oakland Farmers' Market Saturdays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Continues through Dec. 20. North Oakland [illegible], 5415 [illegible] St., Oakland.

North Shattuck Farmers' Market Thursdays, 3-7 p.m. Free admission. 510-548-3333, EcologyCenter.org. Shattuck Ave. at Rose St., Berkeley.

Pacific Coast Jack London Farmers' Market Sundays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Jack London Square, 50 Broadway, Oakland.

[illegible] Farmers' Market Saturdays, 9 a.m.-[illegible] p.m. Free. Fernandez Ave. & Pinole St., Pinole.

[illegible] Farmers' Market Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. Pleasanton Farmers' Market, West Angela St., Pleasanton.

Richmond Certified Farmers' Market Fridays, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Richmond Farmers' Market, 14th St. & Macdonald Ave., Richmond.

Richmond Farmer's Market Fridays, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. Richmond Farmers' Market, 14th St. & Nevin Ave., Richmond.

Saturday Berkeley Farmers' Market Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. 510-548-3333, EcologyCenter.org. MLK Civic Center Park, 2151 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley. 510-548-3333, Ci.Berkeley.Ca.Us/Content/Display.aspx?id=12136.

Temescal Farmers' Market Sundays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. DMV Parking Lot, 5300 Claremont Ave., Oakland.

Tuesday Berkeley Farmers' Market Tuesdays, 2-7 p.m. Free. 510-548-3333, EcologyCenter.org. Derby St. (at Martin Luther King Jr. Way), Berkeley.

Union City Farmers' Market Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. Old Alvarado/Union Square Park, Smith & Watkins St., Union City. ●

meats/Vegetarian/Vegan) $

[illegible] Bakery 5000 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible] (Bakery/Coffeehouse) $-$$

[illegible] 4001 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-450-[illegible] (Spanish/Tapas/Small Plates/Wine Bar) $$$

Market Superstar 4721 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-652-2800 (Southeast Asian) $$

[illegible] 6407 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible] (African/Ethiopian/Eritrean/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

[illegible] 4301 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible] (Korean) $

[illegible] 4275 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible] (Korean) $$

[illegible] 5004 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible] (Mexican) $$$

[illegible] 3102 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible] (Korean) $$

[illegible] 4390 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible] (Korean) $$

[illegible] Cafe 4152 [illegible], Oakland. 510-[illegible] (Breakfast, Brunch) $

The [illegible] 4328 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible] (California Cuisine, Cal-Mexican) $$

[illegible] Korean Restaurant 3915 Broadway, Oakland. 510-[illegible] (Korean) $$-$$$

Oakland [illegible] Chicken [illegible] 5101 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible] (Korean) $-$$

[illegible] 3915 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible] (Barbecue/American/Burgers/Sandwiches/Southern/Soul Food) $-$$

[illegible] 5000 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible] (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable/Pizza) $$-$$$

[illegible] 4833 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible] (Seafood/Southern/Soul Food) $

[illegible] Barbeque [illegible] 3000 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible] (Korean) $-$$

[illegible] 3801 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible] (Korean) $

[illegible] 3919 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible] (Chinese/Korean) $

PICK

Christmas Dinner

Wh[illegible] there at we at home when **Spenger's Fresh Fish Grotto** (1919 Fourth St., Berkeley) is decorated for the season and serving a prix fixe **Christmas dinner** all day on Saturday, Dec. 25? Entrée choices include roasted turkey breast and sugar-glazed ham; both include sourdough-bread stuffing, candied yams, mashed potatoes, green bean casserole, gravy, and cranberry sauce. [illegible] can order from the à la carte menu. 11:30 a.m.-9 p.m., $24.95 (for prix-fixe meal). Spengers.com. *— Anneli Rufus*

TRI-VALLEY

[illegible] 625 Main St., Pleasanton. 925-411-[illegible] (Mexican) $$$

[illegible] [illegible] Main St., Sunol. 925-[illegible] (American/Steak House) $$-$$$

[illegible] 2410 San Ramon Blvd., Suite 141, San Ramon. 925-314-0974 (California Cuisine) $$$

[illegible] 2030 First St., Livermore. 925-449-6454 (Mexican) $

[illegible] Cafe 620 Main St., Pleasanton. 925-[illegible] (American/Breakfast/Brunch) $-$$

[illegible] Steakhouse 200 Sycamore Valley Rd. West, [illegible] 925-[illegible] (Steak House) $$$

[illegible] Original 122 W. Neal St., Pleasanton. 925-[illegible] (American/Steak House) $$$

[illegible] 4825 Hopyard Rd., Suite F7, Pleasanton. 925-[illegible] (Barbecue/Deli) $

[illegible] 165 Town & Country Dr., Suite G, Danville. 925-[illegible] (Barbecue/Deli) $

[illegible] 2550 [illegible] Plaza, [illegible] 925-[illegible] (Barbecue/Deli) $

[illegible] 489 San Ramon Valley Blvd., Danville. 925-[illegible] (Italian/Pizza) $$

[illegible] Restaurant 410 Sycamore Valley Rd. W., Danville. 925-[illegible] (Asian Fusion/California Cuisine) $$$$

[illegible] Cafe 4510 Dublin Blvd., Dublin. 925-[illegible] (American) $

[illegible] 500 Bollinger Canyon Way, San Ramon. 925-[illegible] (Italian) $-$$$

[illegible] 260 Market Pl., San Ramon. 925-[illegible] (Mexican) $

[illegible] 4555 Rosewood Dr., Pleasanton. 925-734-[illegible] (Mexican) $

[illegible] 400 San Ramon Valley Blvd., Danville. 925-[illegible] (Mexican) $

[illegible] 533 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton. 925-737-[illegible] (Mexican) $

[illegible] at the Vineyard 39 S. Livermore Ave., Livermore. 925-[illegible] (Chinese) $$-$$$

[illegible] Restaurant 5050 Arroyo Rd., Livermore. 925-456-2450 (California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$$

[illegible] 115 Alamo Plaza, Alamo. 925-[illegible] (California Cuisine/Eastern European) $$

[illegible] 3496 [illegible] Circle, Danville. 925-[illegible] (Japanese/Sushi) $$-$$$

Zachary's Chicago Pizza 3110 Crow Canyon Pl., Suite D, San Ramon. 925-244-1222 (Pizza) $-$$

WALNUT CREEK

[illegible] Deli & Restaurant 1815 Newell Ave., Walnut Creek. 925-210-[illegible] (Eastern European) $$

[illegible] 1142 Broadway Plaza, Walnut Creek. 925-939-[illegible] (American/Steak House/Bars & Clubs) $$$

[illegible] 1358 N. Main St., Walnut Creek. 925-256-[illegible] (Indian/Pakistani/Organic/Sustainable) $-$$

[illegible] 1651 [illegible] Blvd., Walnut Creek. 925-[illegible] (Chinese) $-$$

[illegible] Hamburger 1461 Newell Ave., Walnut Creek. 925-[illegible] (Diner) $

[illegible] 1500 [illegible] St., Walnut Creek. 925-[illegible] (California Cuisine/Cajun/Creole) $$

[illegible] 1517 Locust St., Walnut Creek. 925-[illegible] (Vietnamese) $$

[illegible] 1938 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Walnut Creek. 925-[illegible] (Cafe) $

[illegible] 1300 Locust St., Walnut Creek. 925-256-1234 (American/California Cuisine/Organic/Sustainable) $$-$$$

[illegible] 1218 Rosewood Way, Walnut Creek. 925-[illegible] (Deli/Italian) $

[illegible] 1520 N. Main St., Walnut Creek. 925-[illegible] (Chinese) $$

[illegible] 2930 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Walnut Creek. 925-[illegible] (Italian/Pizza) $-$$

Tiki [illegible] 1535 Olympic Blvd., Walnut Creek. 925-[illegible] (Hawaiian) $

[illegible] Club 1556 [illegible] St., Walnut Creek. 925-[illegible] (California/Organic/Sustainable/Seafood) $$-$$$ ■

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Local Food View:
A Holiday Meal for All

Holiday celebrations are as diverse as Bay Area residents, but they all have one thing in common: food. During the holiday season families, friends, and community members gather to cook and eat together in a ritual that we all share. For many families and communities here in the Bay Area, putting food on the table is a daily challenge, especially this year. For those of us who can give and want to give, whether it's a cooked meal or some extra goods from our pantry, now is the time to reach out and provide food to those who need it most. There are food banks and food delivery services in every city and town in the Bay so find one near you and click or call.

Happy holidays from CAFF!
We hope you eat well and eat locally all season long.

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THE DUDE, NOT THE DUKE

The bad guys in *True Grit* use guns. In *Casino Jack*, they use senators and congresspersons.

By Kelly Vance

Jeff Bridges stars as Rooster Cogburn in *True Grit*.

"Intense sequences of western violence." These are the words we love to hear. It means that another contemporary filmmaker is trying his — or in the case of **Ethan and Joel Coen**, makers of ***True Grit***, their — hand at reviving the western.

That hard-to-kill, ostensibly outdated genre, periodically revived by everyone from James Mangold (*3:10 to Yuma*) to Tommy Lee Jones (*The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*) to Andrew Dominik (*The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford*), evidently sits in a sweet spot with the Coen Bros. Their last stab at it was 2007's *No Country for Old Men*, with its Texas borderland narcotraficante milieu and monolithic hit man. Compared to that, *True Grit* is a cozy buggy ride down memory lane. But in the West imagined by **Charles Portis**' 1968 novel and the Coens, even an exercise in nostalgia comes equipped with sudden death and the cold irony that always attends stories from the era of America's Manifest Destiny.

Other than for nostalgia's sake, there's little reason to compare and contrast the Coens' *True Grit* to the 1969 **John Wayne-Henry Hathaway** oater of the same name. The new film is a grand excuse to put **Jeff Bridges** on a horse one more time and let him coast in the wake of his inspired role-playing in *Crazy Heart*. With Wayne the situation was a little different.

Back then, the Duke was a legend in the twilight of his career. The then-62-year-old's turn as Reuben "Rooster" Cogburn, the cantankerous, drunken US Marshal who helps young Mattie Ross track down her father's murderer on the frontier, clearly has the feel of a Hollywood valedictory. Indeed, career patriot Wayne's only film after *True Grit* was the even more elegiac *The Shootist*. Bridges, even though he turned 61 earlier this month, seems younger by comparison. We'd like to think he has years to go before he hangs up his spurs.

Chief among the Coens' improvements on the franchise is thirteen-year-old **Hailee Steinfeld** in the part of Mattie, who rides into Fort Smith, Arkansas, to hire a posse of revenge. Ms. Steinfeld, who has worked on TV, brings a gorgeous combo of proto-feminist spunk and her own grit to Mattie's part as the teller of the tale. Her voiceover narration adds weighty authenticity to the slender yarn, and her clipped, utterly confident vocal delivery tells us everything we need to know about who wears the britches on this expedition. Mattie's negotiation with the slippery Col. Stonehill (actor **Dakin Matthews** in a brilliant short scene) over her father's estate is one of the film's numerous highlights.

A large part of the fun in watching Rooster, Mattie, their Texas Ranger trail buddy LaBoeuf (**Matt Damon**), head bad guy Tom Chaney (**Josh Brolin**), Lucky Ned Pepper (**Barry Pepper**) and the rest of the bushwhackers they meet across the river in the Choctaw Nation — shot on location in Texas and New Mexico — comes from the beautifully descriptive, yet archaic English they speak. Here's a sample exchange. Mattie: "He has abandoned me to a congress of louts." Lucky Ned: "You do not varnish your opinion." The actors speak those lines with an elocutionary staginess that runs against the grain of screen acting as it has been practiced since the mid-1950s. It's the polar opposite of naturalistic. **Elizabeth Marvel**, as the forty-year-old Mattie, particularly revels in the language.

True Grit

Directed by Ethan Coen and Joel Coen. With Jeff Bridges and Hailee Steinfeld. Opens today.

Casino Jack

Directed by George Hickenlooper. With Kevin Spacey and Jon Lovitz. Opens today.

We love the flowery 19th-century turn of phrase as much as anyone, but at about the halfway point we begin to wonder if instead of declaring, for instance, "I reckon we'll meet again in the sweet bye-and-bye, my dove," a person who's just been shot would be better off just simply saying, "Oh shit, I got hit." Our American language is a living organism and that is a specimen of it from more than 130 years ago. We should relax and enjoy it for its showmanship and let Rooster do the complaining, as when he accuses LaBoeuf of "spilling the banks of English."

The inhabitants of Yell County, Arkansas, in the 1870s are also intensely religious and make constant matter-of-fact references to the Almighty. You'll get used to it. The old Protestant hymn "Leaning on the Everlasting Arm" — beloved by fans of Robert Mitchum in *The Night of the Hunter* — makes several appearances, notably in **Iris DeMent**'s twinkling version over the end credits.

Bridges looks comfortable falling out of his saddle and ventilating varmints. He's in that hang-loose groove left over from Michael Cimino's *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* or, more to the point, Walter Hill's *Wild Bill*, where he played rootin' tootin' Wild Bill Hickok as another Wild West substance abuser. Not exactly on the same plane as The Dude, but in the same solar system. The Coen Bros. should seriously consider making westerns every other time out instead of every third time, and using Jeff Bridges in one or two.

Who wants to see another movie about sleazy rightwing DC dealmakers, especially busted ones? ***Casino Jack*** arrives in theaters this week as the second film this year about the career of mega-lobbyist and convicted grafter **Jack Abramoff**, who ripped off Native American casino operators and ordinary taxpayers with equal ease during the reign of George W. Bush. The first, a documentary called *Casino Jack and the United States of Money*, made us sick like every other Outrage Doc — the waste, the hypocrisy, the cluck, etc. The new one, directed by **George Hickenlooper**, who died in October, merely echoes the original nausea.

Kevin Spacey, as master fixer Abramoff, has the Jack Benny look nailed. His first reel soliloquy with his toothbrush sets the tone, and it's downhill from there: **Tom DeLay** (played by **Spencer Garrett**), Miami casino cruise goons, conservative strategy nabob **Grover Norquist** (**Jeffrey Smith**), hookers, Other People's Money, and Jack's annoying habit of quoting from his favorite movies every five minutes. Feeding time at the zoo.

Jon Lovitz, as Abramoff pal **Adam Kidan**, is the best excuse for watching this. **Barry Pepper**, winner of this week's Double Trouble award, plays Abramoff acolyte **Michael Scanlon**. Best line of dialogue, by screenwriter **Norman Snider**: "You fellas on the right used to have ideas, but now that communism is gone, all you can think about is money." Instead of two stars, give it three Maalox bottles. ●

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MOVIES & THEATERS

To learn where a movie is playing, note the abbreviations at the end of each listing, then consult the theater guide at the bottom of this page. Capsule reviews are written by Andrea Gronvall (A.G.), Cole Haddon (C.H.), J.R. Jones (J.J.), and Kelly Vance (K.V.). For a schedule of repertory films, see One-Night Stands at the end of these listings. Please send info fourteen days before event date to editor@eastbayexpress.com

OPENING

Gulliver's Travels Jack Black stars in this modern-day adaptation of Jonathan Swift's 1726 novel. Also starring Jason Segel. Directed by Rob Letterman and adapted by Joe Stillman and Nicholas Stoller. BP [illegible]

Little Fockers [illegible]

[illegible]

True Grit See this week's review. [illegible] (K.V.) BP, CCC, CA, RUC [illegible]

ONGOING

127 Hours An experienced outdoorsman (James Franco) [illegible] Danny Boyle and Simon Beaufoy, with the help of A.R. Rahman's music and cinematography by Enrique Chediak and Anthony Dod Mantle [illegible]

[illegible]

Black Swan Natalie Portman's performance as a [illegible]

Showtimes Online

More showtimes and online ticket-buying at EastBayExpress.com

Theater Guide

This guide explains the abbreviations at the end of each capsule. **AL** = Landmark Albany, [illegible]

[illegible] the story might have achieved its [illegible] power. (107 min.) (A.V.,BS, CWC, CD, CEPH, CH, CUC, CAPH, CA, PM, RH, RCC, V

Burlesque Christina Aguilera is an Iowa [illegible] who [illegible] her way to [illegible] on the Sunset Strip. Cher is the owner [illegible] standing costumes [illegible] *Grey's Anatomy* [illegible] This slick, [illegible] everything from [illegible] of 1933 to *Showgirls* [illegible] choreographers [illegible] burlesque [illegible] a throwback to [illegible] writer-director [illegible] something [illegible] *Burlesque* [illegible] "I [illegible]" With Stanley Tucci and Alan Cumming. (119 min.) (A.G.,BS, BP, CWC, CB, CEPH, CH, CUC, S, UA, V

Carlos This [illegible], [illegible] biographical [illegible] of [illegible] Sánchez, aka Carlos the Jackal, based on a [illegible] made-for-TV three-part mini-series, and [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] revolutionary [illegible] from the 1970s [illegible] array of [illegible] in Europe and the Middle East, actor Edgar Ramírez [illegible] [illegible] What is a revolutionary after all? And what is a [illegible]? No easy answers [illegible] plenty of [illegible] to supply any [illegible] of movie spy thrillers. The huge cast includes [illegible] [illegible] (330 min.) (R.V #ICC

The Chronicles of [illegible]: The Voyage of the [illegible] [illegible] *(The [illegible] Is Not Enough)* and famous for his [illegible] documentaries [illegible] *(Seven Up* [illegible]*)*, veteran [illegible] Michael Apted was an inspired [illegible] for this third installment of the franchise based on C.S. Lewis's stories fantasy novels. The two [illegible] Pevensie [illegible] (Skandar Keynes, Georgie Henley) and their [illegible] (Will Poulter, outstanding) are pulled into the mystical realm of Narnia to [illegible] seven [illegible] [illegible] The [illegible] dragon [illegible] effects [illegible] alive, while the [illegible] Lewis's Christian [illegible] our [illegible] [illegible] (115 min.) (A.G, BS, BP, CWC, CB, CEPH, CH, CUC, CA, RH, JL, UA)

Dinosaurs Alive! From the [illegible] dinosaurs are uncovered by paleontologists and [illegible] (G) ESC

Due Date Robert Downey Jr. [illegible] to L.A. before his wife delivers their first child, [illegible] Zach Galifianakis [illegible] only [illegible] from the plane [illegible] on the no-fly list, the two [illegible] on a cross-country [illegible] This [illegible] comedy [illegible] Todd Phillips, who [illegible] *The Hangover* [illegible] [illegible] Phillips has already [illegible] [illegible] (2000)—and this is [illegible] by comparison. (100 min.) (ATC, BV, BC, CB, CR, CUC

Fair Game The real story of how the Bush administration ruined the career of CIA agent Valerie Plame (Naomi Watts) and her diplomat husband Joseph Wilson (Sean Penn) for exposing the "weapons of mass destruction" [illegible] for the Iraq invasion, [illegible] 2003, [illegible] of [illegible] America. They [illegible] [illegible] Doug Liman (*The Bourne Identity*, *Swingers*), with help from Jez and John-Henry Butterworth's screenplay (adapted from books by [illegible] Plame) [illegible] (107 min.) (CV) (CAPH, PM, S

Faster A former getaway driver (Dwayne Johnson) goes after the men responsible for the murder of his brother. [illegible] [illegible] Billy Bob Thornton [illegible] *(Soul Food)* and screenwriters Tony and Joe Gayton [illegible] *The Driver* (1978) and *Johnny* [illegible] (1980) [illegible] the movie takes the form of an evangelical parable, with [illegible] (98 min.) (LV, BPK, BC, CB, CR

The Fighter [illegible] boxing pic is nevertheless hampered by a [illegible] screenplay and frantic overacting by virtually the entire cast. Working-class [illegible] Micky Ward (Mark Wahlberg) [illegible] half-brother (Christian Bale) and [illegible] mother (Melissa Leo) while trying to punch his way to the top. Also in Micky's corner is his equally tough girlfriend (Amy Adams). The fight sequences are the [illegible] thing about it. The knuckle-sandwich script, by a [illegible] writers [illegible] (114 min.) (A.V.,BP, CWC, CB, CEPH, CH, CWC, CAPH, CR, DN, GL, RH, JL, UAB, UATS

For Colored Girls Tyler Perry directs, produces, and adapts the ensemble film based on [illegible] Ntozake Shange's play *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf* [illegible] Loretta Devine, Thandie Newton, Kimberly Elise, and others. (120 min.) (ATC, CV, UA2)

The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest The third and final installment in [illegible] Stieg Larsson's "Millennium Trilogy." [illegible] protagonist Lisbeth Salander (played to the hilt by Noomi Rapace)

LANDMARK THEATRES

[illegible]

ALBANY 1115 Solano Ave. at San Pablo, Albany
[illegible] www.landmarktheatres.com 277-FILM #012

[illegible]

CALIFORNIA 2113 Kittredge near Shattuck, Berkeley
[illegible] www.landmarktheatres.com 277-FILM #015

[illegible]

BLACK SWAN (R)

[illegible]

PIEDMONT 4186 Piedmont at 41st, Oakland
[illegible]

BLACK SWAN (R)

[illegible]

FAIR GAME (PG-13)

[illegible]

THE KING'S SPEECH (R)

[illegible]

SHATTUCK 2230 Shattuck at Kittredge, Berkeley
[illegible] www.landmarktheatres.com 277-FILM #013

[illegible]

LITTLE FOCKERS (PG-13)

[illegible]

THE TOURIST (PG-13)

[illegible]

BURLESQUE (PG-13)

[illegible]

THE GIRL WHO KICKED THE HORNET'S NEST (R)

[illegible]

RARE EXPORTS: A CHRISTMAS TALE (R)

[illegible]

127 HOURS (R)

[illegible]

Screening Lounge

Screening Lounge

FAIR GAME (PG-13)

[illegible]

Screening Lounge

I LOVE YOU PHILLIP MORRIS (R)

[illegible]

Screening Lounge

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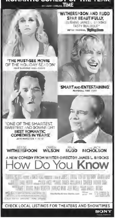
[illegible]

Fine Screening Lounge



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TIME
"WITHERSPOON AND RUDD SPAR BEAUTIFULLY, RELISHING JAMES L. BROOKS' TASTY DIALOGUE."
PETER TRAVERS, Rolling Stone
"THE MUST-SEE MOVIE OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON."
"SMART AND ENTERTAINING."
"ONE OF THE SMARTEST, SWEETEST AND DOWNRIGHT BEST ROMANTIC COMEDIES IN YEARS."
REESE WITHERSPOON
OWEN WILSON
PAUL RUDD
JACK NICHOLSON
A NEW COMEDY FROM WRITER-DIRECTOR JAMES L. BROOKS
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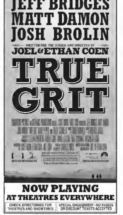
SONY



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recovering from her wounds and taking the bad guys. Her sympathy will further her [illegible] behavioral [illegible] and the misogynistic bastards of the Swedish government, in court for a legal showdown in the wake of the first two [illegible]. All the while Swedish actress Noomi Rapace's Lisbeth is the ideal riot grrl, and righteous but laid-back journalist Mikael Blomkvist (Michael Nyqvist) is her perfect complementary companion. Together they [illegible] fighting about [illegible] and [illegible] by corruption. Director Daniel Alfredson (The Girl Who Played with Fire) supplies [illegible], with [illegible] and Ulf Ryberg adapting the late Larsson's novel. A winner. (148 min.) [illegible]

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1 Cliffhanger seventh episode of the franchise. Despite "Harry Harry" [illegible], Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes) and his [illegible] among Harry (Daniel Radcliffe), Hermione (Emma Watson) and red-haired Ron Weasley (Rupert Grint). Despite an undercover visit to the Ministry of Magic and the [illegible] sequence, the "Three Brothers" legend [illegible]. Take away the [illegible] and you've got an [illegible] big-budget thriller like any other — but that would [illegible] Rhys Ifans, [illegible] Shaw, Imelda Staunton, and Andy Linden [illegible]. The Potter series' [illegible] (146 min.) [illegible]

Hereafter Clint Eastwood tries to make a meaningful [illegible] drama about a clutch of [illegible], death-obsessed [illegible] subjects: mortality. People [illegible] the interconnectedness of human [illegible]. Surprisingly, he succeeds. With the help of screenwriter Peter Morgan (Frost/Nixon, The Damned United, The Queen) and a thoughtful [illegible] by Matt Damon, Cécile de France and young English twins George and Frankie McLaren, Eastwood [illegible] the Babel/Crash Canyon/Magnolia [illegible] the [illegible] of it all. The best [illegible] — shot mostly at England's Pinewood [illegible] and in Paris, Hawaii, and San Francisco — are among the best work Eastwood has ever done. (129 min.) [illegible]

How Do You Know James L. Brooks [illegible] TV [illegible] (The Mary Tyler Moore Show, Taxi) [illegible] Terms of Endearment, As Good As It Gets [illegible]. Reese Witherspoon as a [illegible] U.S. Olympic softball player [illegible] between [illegible] (Owen Wilson) [illegible] Washington Nationals baseball star and a [illegible] (Paul Rudd) as a [illegible] analyst charged with securities fraud. [illegible] (116 min.) [illegible]

I Love You Phillip Morris Con man [illegible] in prison. In the hands of Jim Carrey [illegible] high concept full of laughs [illegible]. Carrey and Ewan McGregor [illegible] in Glenn Ficarra and John Requa's [illegible] study based on the [illegible] of a real-life Texas con man [illegible] homosexuality [illegible]. Screenplay adapted by Ficarra and Requa from the nonfiction book by Steve McVicker. (102 min.) [illegible]

Inside Job So who got us into the Great Recession? Greedy banks, rapacious financiers, [illegible] and [illegible] government [illegible] Charles Ferguson (No End in Sight) [illegible] Matt Damon [illegible] "global financial [illegible]" [illegible] Christine Lagarde, IMF [illegible] Dominique Strauss-Kahn [illegible] (120 min.) [illegible]

Kings of Pastry Documentary [illegible] Chris Hegedus and D.A. Pennebaker [illegible] "competition doc" about France's [illegible] (Meilleurs Ouvriers de France) [illegible] Chicago [illegible] Jacquy Pfeiffer [illegible] three-day [illegible] observed every step of the way by a platoon of

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[illegible]
THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT
(4:45) 9:40 R
[illegible]
KINGS OF PASTRY
(5:00) NR [illegible]
RED
(2:30) 7:15 PG-13 [illegible]
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[illegible] (117 min.) (R,V [illegible]

The King's Speech [illegible] the Duke of York (Colin Firth) [illegible] King George VI [illegible] Lionel Logue (Geoffrey Rush) [illegible] (118 min.) [illegible]

Love and Other Drugs [illegible] (Anne Hathaway) [illegible] Hathaway and Gyllenhaal [illegible] (113 min.) [illegible]

Showtimes Online
Movie showtimes and online ticket-buying at EastBayExpress.com

Megamind [illegible] Will Ferrell [illegible] Brad Pitt [illegible] Tina Fey [illegible] (96 min.) [illegible]

Morning Glory [illegible] Rachel McAdams [illegible] Harrison Ford [illegible] Jeff Goldblum [illegible] (107 min.) [illegible]

Mysteries of [illegible] National Geographic [illegible]

The Next Three Days [illegible] (Russell Crowe) [illegible] (Elizabeth Banks) [illegible] Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania? [illegible] Paul Haggis [illegible] Liam Neeson [illegible] (133 min.) [illegible]

No [illegible] Bollywood [illegible] (130 min.) [illegible]

Rare Exports: A Christmas Tale [illegible] Northern Finland [illegible] Santa Claus [illegible] (84 min.) (K,V,) [illegible]

RED [illegible] CIA [illegible] Bruce Willis [illegible] John Malkovich, Helen Mirren, and Morgan Freeman [illegible] White House [illegible] (111 min.) [illegible]

[illegible] (150 min.) [illegible]

The Social Network Director David Fincher (The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, Fight Club), [illegible] Aaron Sorkin (The West Wing, Charlie Wilson's War) [illegible] Facebook [illegible] Jesse Eisenberg's [illegible] Mark Zuckerberg [illegible] Andrew Garfield [illegible] Timberlake, Rooney Mara [illegible] (121 min.) [illegible]

Furniture [illegible]

Tangled The tale of Rapunzel [illegible] Disney [illegible] (Mandy Moore) [illegible] "Mother Knows Best," [illegible] (92 min.) [illegible]

Tiny Furniture [illegible] Lena Dunham [illegible] New York [illegible] (98 min.) [illegible]

To Be an Astronaut [illegible] NASA [illegible] (40 min.) [illegible]

The Tourist [illegible] Angelina Jolie [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] (Garrett Hedlund) [illegible] Bruce Boxleitner [illegible] (125 min.) [illegible]

Tron: Legacy [illegible] Disney's [illegible] Jeff Bridges [illegible] (Garrett Hedlund) [illegible] (125 min.) [illegible]

Unstoppable Thriller about a runaway train and the guys [illegible] by Denzel Washington and Chris Pine [illegible]

[illegible] Mark [illegible] (93 min.) [illegible]

The Way Back [illegible] Kate Bosworth [illegible]

Yogi Bear [illegible] Dan Aykroyd [illegible] Justin Timberlake [illegible]

ONE NIGHT STANDS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29

[illegible] Retrospective, Part II. [illegible] filmmaker Steve Jacobson [illegible] 8:30 p.m. (Humanist Hall, [illegible] 7:30)

GRAND LAKE THEATRE
BEST EAST BAY THEATER
[illegible]

TRON LEGACY Digital 3D DOLBY DIGITAL 7.1 (PG13)
DAILY 12:30 3:45, 7:00, 9:45

LITTLE FOCKERS (PG13)
DAILY 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30, 10:00

CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: VOYAGE OF THE DAWN TREADER Digital 3D (PG13)
DAILY 12:15 2:45 5:05 7:25, 9:35

THE FIGHTER (R)
DAILY 1:00 4:00 7:15, 9:56

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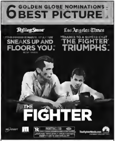
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ODE TO THE WALKMAN, IN MEMORIUM

DJs and analog enthusiasts mourn the demise of Technic 1200s and portable cassette players

By David MacFadden Elliott

Two beloved music industry icons were reported dead this year: **The Walkman** and **the Technics 1200**, both of Japan. Their respective manufacturers, **Sony** and **Panasonic**, kept official word to a minimum (repeated requests for comments from both companies went unanswered), while mourners were left wondering, "Are they really, *really* dead?" "What will I do now?" and "Sony still makes a Walkman?" The suspected killer: diminished sales, who has masterminded myriad marketplace massacres, remains at large. As for the accomplice, the **iPod**, well, what goes around comes around, buddy. Today's sleek, convenient, portable sound player is tomorrow's dead Walkman.

Shortly after its public debut in 1979, the Walkman was met with enthusiasm by joggers and disdain by cultural critics. "**Akio Morita**'s Walkman lets everyone march — or boogie — to his own drummer," said *People Weekly*. "A great way to snub the world," said *Time*. Marching and snubbing have since gotten easier with digital devices, and on October 25, the Associated Press reported that "Sony stopped Japanese production of the portable music player in April." Buried at the end of the article was this note — "Sony will continue production of the cassette Walkman in China to accommodate users abroad including in the U.S." — but outraged fans didn't read that far.

Ironically, the death of portable cassette players coincides with a recent, unexpected resurgence of cassette fetishization, as we've reported previously. **Don Campau** says as much in his web monthly called *The Living Archive*, which covers "cassette culture home taping, [and] underground music." **Annie Lin**, cofounder of the **SF Mixtape Society**, is another enthusiast who is driving interest in cassette culture. During her day job as a music supervisor for film and TV, she welcomes the eco-friendly mp3, but otherwise appreciates the tactile attachment to physical formats. "With time, digital has become more important," said Lin, speaking from her office in the Presidio, "but there has been the fetishization of vinyl — cassettes, as well, are fetishized by some. Having the ability to access your music digitally is very convenient, [but] it also feels very evanescent and intangible. The digital revolution takes away the physicality of listening to music."

As far as the Walkman goes, Lin's got one — she keeps it around for its convenient recording function.

David Paul of San Francisco's **Bomb Hip-Hop** recently announced plans for a Tape Deck Party. He got the idea while mounting a series of gallery shows dedicated to album cover art. "Part of the show was dedicated to cassette artwork," said Paul, "and I thought it would be cool to do an all cassette party someday. The DJs will be using four dual cassette tape decks. If I can find my old Walkman I'll use that too — it would be fun."

A DJ playing a cassette is a rare sight indeed, but a DJ commanding the dance floor from behind a pair of **Technics SL-1200**s is ubiquitous. Since the late-Seventies, the 1200 has reigned as the gold standard among DJs, mentioned by name in hundreds of hip-hop songs and laying the foundations of thousands more.

"The solid construction, direct-drive motor and durability of the 1200 are hard to match," commented **Bret Winans**, of Brooklyn's **Turntable Lab**. "Plus it just looks great."

So it was a heavy new shock to some when the *Tokyo Reporter* reported that on October 26, Panasonic said it was "winding down production of the Technics SL-1200MK6 analog turntable ... due to challenges in the marketplace."

Despite the popularity of the Technics 1200, Panasonic has been unsure of the brand's future since at least 2007, when the first wave of panic hit. Panasonic's waffling between discontinuing some of the 1200 models and killing the model as a whole has prompted skepticism in the DJ community.

DJ Platurn, of the **Oakland Faders**, commented: "As far as I know the Technics have not been discontinued. These announcements usually come right around the busiest shopping times of the year. But the Technics 12 being scrapped altogether won't happen anytime soon, not while DJing is still a multimillion dollar industry and the turntable is still the most popular way to play your music, be it a 45 or a digitally controlled mp3."

Mark Settle, aka **Gizmo** of **Skratchworx**, an online hub for DJs, was so frustrated with Panasonic's lack of public communication that he wrote an open letter to the electronics behemoth "on behalf of the entire DJ scene," in which he outlined the situation and demanded an official statement. "Only when people can read [a clarification] for themselves on an official Panasonic source will people actually believe it to be true and stop living in denial. Then the grieving process can start for real."

Mark commented from the UK, "The overwhelming evidence through the usual sources inside the industry has been that the brand is to be closed down. But still no direct statement exists on a Panasonic site, other than the Japanese site showing discontinued against the MK6 turntable. This has given the nay-sayers a straw to clutch at, as it doesn't mean the MK2 and MK5 are being discontinued. Denial is a scary thing to see."

Bret at the Turntable Lab offers more evidence that this is the curtain call for the embattled brand. "There was a similar scare last year which seems to have started a price hike, but now the turntables have become a bit harder to come by from our distributors."

And so the table turns. Even if the 1200 and the Walkman are kept on life support for a few years, it's clear what the fates have in store for them. The technologically nostalgic will have to look to used models or elsewhere to have "fun" or indulge their "fetishes." Luckily there's a device for everyone's kink.

For David Paul, **Audio-Technica**'s 120 series is a fair replacement for the 1200. Mark Settle takes the sentiment further, stating, "I never drank the Technics Kool Aid. I personally use **Numark TTX** decks, and more recently **Stanton STR8-150**s." Bret Winans holds fast to his 1200s, though he acknowledges that the Numark brand is the likely successor in terms of "features and durability."

Annie Lin plays her iPod or iPhone through a cassette adapter in her car. And at home she rocks vinyl — the most inconvenient, heavy, shatter-prone vinyl available. "I collect 78s," she said. "I'm pretty nerdy like that."

DJ Platurn still buys "cassette singles and rare tapes at the flea market," and eulogizes his fallen friend: "RIP to the Walkman — my allowance went mostly to your batteries."

If it's a Walkman you're in the mood for, swing by the Walkman forum at StereoGo.com, where enthusiasts debate the merits of spending big money on rare Walkmans (and debate the correct plural form of Walkman). If that's not arcane enough for you, how about a cassette adapter that will fit into an eight-track car stereo? **eBay** awaits in them. ■

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RAPPERS AND PARISHIONERS

Brother Ali saves Christmas at The New Parish

By Rachel Swan

Last week's fourth annual "How the Grouch Stole Christmas" show seemed remarkably ascetic for hip-hop. And by ascetic, I mean there were fewer people onstage than there were stereo speakers. There were other accoutrements, though, most of them related to the holiday theme. An inflatable Santa Claus stood opposite an inflatable Frosty the Snowman, both with raised fists. A toy tree glowed greenly in the background. Red bordello lighting lit the exposed brick walls of **The New Parish**, making the whole nightclub resemble the inside of a chimney.

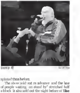
The whole purpose of this show — conceived by **Living Legends** rapper **The Grouch** — is to have an anti-Christmas Christmas. To that end, he assembled an appropriate cast of characters: Panamanian duo **Los Rakas**, fellow Legend **Eligh**, and the night's main highlight, Minneapolis-born Muslim rapper **Brother Ali**. Collectively, they seemed like a perfect antidote to the commercialism and mandatory good cheer that makes Christmas so hard to stomach. And they clearly saw themselves that way, too.

"Do you know how hard it is to be an albino at Christmas time?" Ali joked, showing a sense of humor about his well-publicized genetic condition. "Everywhere I go, kids be trying to climb in my lap, telling me what they want for Christmas and shit." The crowd roared.

The irony, of course, was that all of these rappers embrace the spirit of Christmas, and not in a tongue-in-cheek kind of way. So much warmth and brotherly love pervaded the hip-hop show that, at points, it looked like we were all about to hold hands and sing a happy kumbaya. And Brother Ali was the main culprit.

Ali is one of the best emcees around if you go for heartfelt, confessional, self-deprecating material that extends from the personal to the general. He's said many times that he's not destined for success, mostly because of the way he looks. He explains that most articulately in "Forest Whitaker": *I got red eyes, and one of 'em's lazy/And they both squint when the sun shines so I get crazy*, he rapped, as audience members mouthed the words. Most of his songs deal with persecution, as a theme in his own life and as an issue in the world at large. He's big on purging insecurities. He talks about being dubbed a terrorist because of his name and his Muslim faith. At The New Parish, he did a medley of songs about marginalized groups: immigrants, kids from broken homes, gay people. Ali seems to love positioning himself as a spokesperson for underrepresented communities.

That said, he's also a champion for all the people he raps about. And his whole m.o. is to make us feel good about ourselves. "How many people in Oakland are beautiful and love themselves?" Ali asked, to rousing cheers from the audience. He paused a beat. "And how many people here are ugly as hell and love themselves, too?" The word "ugly" had a certain sting in it, which gave the audience pause. But once we all got his drift, the applause was even more spirited than before.


Brother Ali

The show sold out in advance, and the line of people waiting "on stand by" stretched half a block. It also sold out the night before at **The Independent** in San Francisco, with the same lineup. And it seemed pretty packed, with only a narrow aisle providing access to the bars and merch tables at either end of the club. The same tour played for a near-capacity crowd at the **Fillmore** last year, which is at least twice the size of The New Parish. But this year, the Grouch opted to work two nights on both sides of the bay. The decision was partly practical, but it was also sentimental: The Grouch is originally from Oakland. His performance was a homecoming of sorts. And his cohorts professed a special feeling for the East Bay, too.

"Let me tell you something that a lot of entertainers say all the time — but I mean it. Because I don't say anything unless I don't mean it," Ali said. "It feels good as *fuck* to be performing in Oakland."

It was hard not to get swept up in the bathos. A girl at stage left turned to the guy next to her. "You know, you have the most beautiful smile!" she gushed. "I've been looking at you and thinking that all night." The guy grinned. "I'm just happy to be here," he said.

Could this really be happening at a hip-hop show?

As Ali's set drew to a close, he turned to DJ Fresh, who had done triple duty that night as the backing man for Eligh and the Grouch, as well. Fresh cued up a horn-rich soul sample, cribbed from **Margie Joseph**'s 1973 version of the song "Touch Your Woman." Sweat streamed down the rapper's head. He got his audience to clap on beats two and four, swaying side to side like parishioners watching a church choir. Ali let the vamp ride out for several bars before launching into "Take Me Home," a love ballad from his 2007 album *The Undisputed Truth*. He sang the album's hook in a guttural tenor: *I promise if you take me home I'll sing a song, then I'll leave you alone.*

For any other rapper, it would have been an ignoble, cloying outro. No groupie action, no video screens, no entourage. But for a guy perched at the back of the stage with a camera, it seemed remarkably sedate — and remarkably lacking in technology — compared to a typical hip-hop performance.

All the same, you could almost see the specter of **Jimmy Stewart**, simpering in the background. Maybe the Grouch didn't steal Christmas after all. ●

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CD REVIEWS

KEEPING IT SAUCY

T.I.'s defiance, Keyshia's urgency, Girl Talk's return.

Keyshia Cole

Calling All Hearts

Much as she exposed her daily travails on the hit 2006-2008 BET reality series *Keyshia Cole: The Way It Is*, the Oakland-raised soul diva has played out the trajectory of her love life over the course of four albums. The heartbroken anguish that oozed from her 2005 debut was way diminished by her third, last year's *A Different Me*, and is absent from the new *Calling All Hearts*, recorded during a period in which she met her fiancé and gave birth to their — and her — first child. And while the raw vocal tones of her early work have been supplanted by a more polished sound, urgency remains the hallmark of her emotion-driven approach to song.

The set begins with a bang in the form of "I Ain't Thru," a saucy, devilishly syncopated dance number featuring current hip-hop queen **Nicki Minaj**. Other guests include **Faith Evans**, **Tank**, and **Timbaland**. Ballads dominate, and most betray Cole's deep grounding in gospel music, particularly "Two Sides to Every Story" ("There's a season for everything ... a time to love and a time to let haters hate," she says in a monologue, cleverly paraphrasing Ecclesiastes 3), the **Diane Warren** power ballad "Better Me" (the only tune among the fourteen on the deluxe edition of the disc that Cole didn't have a hand in writing), and "Thank You" (a religious ode with background vocals by **Dr. Yvonne Cole**, Keyshia's foster mother). Cole continues to wear her heart on her sleeve; only now it has a happy face. (Geffen)

—*Lee Hildebrand*

Girl Talk

All Day

If **Girl Talk** is a gimmick, it's a great one. Since the emergence of mash-ups ages ago in the late Nineties, these peculiar songs have trafficked in two layers of novelty: that of realizing two or more songs can be spun into one, and that of rediscovering certain songs within the context of other certain songs — like **Fugazi**'s "Waiting Room" carrying **Rihanna**'s "Rude Boy," as Girl Talk, aka **Gregg Gillis**, manages in his excellent new album's second track, "Let It Out." Early practitioners, many of them based in the Bay Area, relied largely on the first layer, stacking two or three songs from different genres or eras and figuring that would be enough. For a while, it was.

But Gillis recognized that the novelty of mash-ups would last only a short time. He knew that if the form was to survive, it would have to maximize the mash-up permutate factor, offering a constant stream of surprises. He was right: the simple fact that mash-ups are possible is no longer interesting. But the fact that **Peter Gabriel**'s "In Your Eyes" fits over **Kid Cudi**'s "Make Her Say" ("That's ... Right") and **Radiohead**'s "Creep" over **Ol' Dirty Bastard**'s "Shimmy Shimmy Ya" ("Jump on Stage") is — and that's a highly renewable novelty.

While Gillis' music is in essence a pastiche of pop-culture references, recognition is not essential to enjoyment. This is particularly true on *All Day*, making it his best work yet. Gimmicks and novelties require context to function, but Girl Talk's art stands its ground even in a void. (Illegal Art)

— *Nate Seltenrich*

T.I.

No Mercy

When **T.I.** went to prison on a probation-violating drug charge last month, it felt like the latest, saddest blow to a career marred by irresponsibility. The rapper's previous album *Paper Trail* described the perils of fame and excess in convincing enough detail that it seemed T.I. had outgrown his old lawlessness. Yet here he was, not two years later, with MDMA and prescription codeine tucked away in his glove compartment.

Another apology would be disingenuous, so T.I. reacted instead with beguiling defiance. *No Mercy* is his strongest disc since 2006's *King*. There are killer collabos ("That's All She Wrote" featuring the lethal non sequiturs of **Eminem**), moving confessionals ("How Life Changed"), trip-hop anthems ("Everything on Me"), woozy atmospherics ("Poppin Bottles"), and cool, dangerous odes to the VIP life ("Welcome to the World"). Stark, stiff ballads like "Castle Walls" don't feel quite as natural, but for the most part T.I. knows his lane and stays in it. On "Amazing," he deadpans gracefully over the descending minimalist beat, rolling out syllables with the easy finesse of a rapper who knows exactly what he's doing.

It's not all kosher. The hard-rock chug of the title track feels labored, even tiresomely monotonous, and the curiously missing "I'm Back" (released as a single in March) rattles with a certain scorching energy that would've fit well here. But *No Mercy* doesn't suffer much without "I'm Back." Bristling with kingly intensity, the album is hard, imposing, unremitting: a triumph that lives up to its potent title. (Atlantic)

— *M.T. Richards*

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LOCAL LICKS

BY RACHEL SWAN

Shuteye Unison

Our Future Selves

"Post rock" may be the preferred descriptor for anything that lacks traditional structure, but this sophomore effort from San Francisco's **Shuteye Unison** is as rock as it gets. Opener [illegible] kicks off with eight bars of crunching guitars and two beats of a kick drum. It ends with one of those dreamy, soaring indie-pop outros. Singer **Daniel McKenzie** has the same breathy cadence as **Billy Corgan**. It's wonderful. (Parks and Records)

Loren Davidson

Island Standard Time

You can't fault **Loren Davidson** for lack of consistency. Not only is his entire album inspired by the beach, it's also animated by island libations. Virtually every song is about escaping from a gray day at the office and flying away to some tropical island. With three backup musicians, he manages to create the illusion of a much larger band. Chief engineer **Kevin Johnston** deserves the lion's share of credit. (Renaissance Island Music)

Thomas Carnacki

The Disappearance of the Terrible Spool

Film editor and soundscape designer **Thomas Carnacki** uses music to create atmosphere rather than transmit emotion. There's no romance to his new noise album, nor is there melody or harmony. All the drama occurs through changes in volume. That said, it's still an intense listening experience. The opening track is full of creaks, slurps, and rugged echoes. "The Fall of Wappinger" calls to mind an orchestra tuning up in a wind tunnel. (Aletheometer Records)

Victory & Associates and Hurry Up Shotgun

Turn Down the Guitars/Paths

Lofty concepts undergird this deceptively simple split seven-inch by two of the Bay Area's grittiest garage bands. Hurry Up Shotgun provides screamy, dueling guitar rock in its song "Paths," while Victory & Associates favors catchy riffs and asymmetrical rhythms. Victory singer **Conan Neutron**'s voice falls somewhere between a chant and a yowl. (self-released)

At Uptown Nightclub (1928 Telegraph Ave., Oakland) on Wednesday, Dec. 22, 9 p.m. free.

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[illegible] ticketmaster

CONCERTS & CLUBS

Editor's Note: Due to the holiday, we highly recommend that you call ahead of time to confirm times before leaving the house.

ON SALE THIS WEEK

Independent w/ Grouch & Violent Tiers. Tickets on sale Wednesday, Dec. 22, 10 a.m., Wed., Feb. 2, 8 p.m., $30. The Warfield, 982 Market St.

WEDNESDAY 22

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] w/ [illegible] Gospel [illegible], 7-9 pm, free

Holiday Music

The Coastaline Dance Flamenco Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse. Dec. 22-23. 8 pm, $18.50-$19.50

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Bolt Caus & the Bloody Stars Rooster's Roadhouse. 8:30 pm, free

Pharoah Sanders Yoshi's, Dec. 22-24. 8 & 10 pm, $22-$30

[illegible] Blues jam w/ guest cabaret singers. The Alley, 8 pm, free

Rock & Pop

[illegible] Tooth Stork Club, 9 pm, $8

SAN FRANCISCO

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] Babylon Club Fugazi, 8 pm, $25-$77

[illegible] w/ Carly [illegible]

Seabird/Skyy Veronica Klaus, Rose Bourn, 8 pm, $30

Dee Nicks & The Hot Licks Yoshi's San Francisco. 8 & 10 pm, $20-$30

[illegible] Cousins & Michael Abraham, 7 pm, free

[illegible] DNA, 7 pm, $7

Rock & Pop

Agalloch Alternative & Gospel Great American Music Hall, 8 pm, $21-$23

The Pharmacist w/ The Atlantic Plan & [illegible] & Monster, Brewer of the Hill, 8 pm, $8

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

[illegible] w/ [illegible] Yoshi's San Francisco, 9 pm, $7

THURSDAY 23

EAST BAY

Classical & Opera

A Chanticleer Christmas [illegible] 7:30 pm, $12-$42

Holiday Music

The Coastaline Dance Christmas Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 pm, $18.50-$20.50

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] Trio The Bistro, 8-11 pm, free

Pharoah Sanders Yoshi's, 8 & 10 pm, $22-$30

Rock & Pop

The Thrill of It All w/ [illegible] & Happy Camp, Starry Plough, 9:30 pm, $8

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

Afrobeats Ashkenaz, 9 pm, $10

SAN FRANCISCO

Experimental & Avant Garde

Luggage Store Gallery Series Presents [illegible] w/ Pretty Cowards, Ben Ramos, Karl Alonso Evangelista, & [illegible]. Luggage Store Gallery, 8 pm, $6-$10

Gospel & Vocal

Gospel Dedicated w/ [illegible] & Gospel Hall Brava Room, 8 pm, $20

Rock & Pop

[illegible] w/ Flash [illegible] and The Runaways, Stud Bar, 8 pm

Pharoah Zaporder [illegible] Hemlock Tavern, 9 pm, $8

[illegible] w/ [illegible] & Friends, plus special guests Paul Freeman, Joey [illegible] (Pantangle) & Amber [illegible], Great American Music Hall, 8 pm, $25

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Bolt [illegible] Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 & 10 pm, $25-$35

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

Flamenco Thursdays w/ [illegible] & [illegible], Peña Pachamama, 8 pm, $12

FRIDAY 24

EAST BAY

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Pharoah Sanders Yoshi's, 8 & 10 pm, $22-$30

[illegible] Blues jam w/ guest cabaret singers. The Alley, 8 pm, free

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

[illegible] live flamenco guitar & Reggaeton on Solano, 7:30 pm, free

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] & Veronica Dedicated [illegible] Flamenco & [illegible], free

Gospel & Vocal

[illegible] American [illegible] Slims, 7 & 9:30 pm, $15

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] w/ [illegible] on Piano Top of the Mark, 6-9 pm, $10-$20

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Pharoah's Christmas Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 pm, $13

SATURDAY 25

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8.00 Classic reggae, ska and rocksteady are on tap with 2 of the biggest reggae heads in the Bay. Unkle Fun aka Jacque Lacey of the mighty OTIT hosts Rudeboy/Rudegirl Sundays at Hotsy Totsy in Albany while DJ Riddim has been a major reggae presence in the East Bay for years and currently hosts Downbeat Special at Room 389 in Oakland on Wednesdays. Classic sounds of Jamaica for the holidays!
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PICKS

Cracker & Camper Van Beethoven

Little [illegible] alternative rock didn't get any quirkier than **Camper Van Beethoven**, whose smorgasbord approach to music found them tossing the disparate sounds of ska, country, punk, and noise-rock into a centrifuge that spat out nuggets like "ZZ Top Goes to Egypt," "Take the Skinheads Bowling," and "Joe Stalin's Cadillac." Even though the Nineties found CVB splitting into the **Monks of Doom** and **Cracker**, camps both sides reconciled with the '99 compilation *Camper Van Beethoven Is Dead, Long Live Camper Van Beethoven*. That reunion was further fortified when the quintet fished out *Tusk*, a note-for-note cover of the legendary **Fleetwood Mac** album which band members claimed they recorded back in 1987 (it turned out to be a hoax). For this show, creative mastermind **David Lowery** will be the evening's emcee, fronting both bands in a never-ending tour that he's dubbed the "Traveling Apothecary Shows." Along with pulling double-duty with both bands on this night, Lowery might even trot out new material from his forthcoming solo debut *The Palace Guards*. The genre-blurring hijinks ensue on Monday, Dec. 27 at **The Independent** (628 Divisadero St., San Francisco). 8 p.m., $25. IndependentSF.com — *Dave Gil de Rubio*

Cracker and Camper Van Beethoven

Vienna Teng

Vienna Teng

Vienna Teng was a globe singer when she graced the inaugural **Outside Lands Festival** in 2008, but she still drew a sizable crowd. It helped that she played with top-notch session [illegible], including local violinist **Dina Macabee**. It also helped that her lyrics are topical — or at least relevant to well-heeled San Francisco progressives: "One Bedroom, One Bath" is about an apartment search in a high-rent coastal city, while "City Hall" champions gay marriage. Teng is not a big belter, but she has a dynamic voice and her arrangements are lovely. The piano lines are intricate enough to show Teng's background in classical music, but they seldom seem overly romantic. Teng appears Thursday, Dec. 23, at **Great American Music Hall** (859 O'Farrell St., San Francisco), in the company of **Alex Wong** and various guests. 8 p.m., $26. GAMH.com — *Rachel Swan*

Tower of Power

The [illegible] **Tower of Power** be[illegible] legends by creating [illegible] unique level of soul music style they dubbed "East Bay grease." Band leader, tenor sax man, and founding father of the band **Emilio Castillo** is still in the house, orchestrating a thrilling blend of funk, soul, blues, and rock. The core of the band is intact and its dynamic horn section is still breathing fire. The band has never stopped touring and recording and is as hip as ever, grooving to the "Oakland Stroke" as it enters its 42nd year. At **Yoshi's** (510 Embarcadero West, Oakland). Dec. 26-29. $25-$45. Yoshis.com — *J. Poet*

San Francisco Symphony

Oh boy, it looks like everyone has gone home for the holidays. Besides **Chanticleer** performing way out in Livermore, your closest quasi-classical, all-musical holiday fare can be found at the **San Francisco Symphony's** "'Twas the Night." The festive occasion includes audience sing-alongs to seasonal tunes and complimentary beverages (as in, libations for Santa). Join in the fun on Thursday, Dec. 23, at 7:30 p.m., or Friday, Dec. 24, at 2 p.m. in **Davies Symphony Hall** (201 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco). $15-$65. 415-864-6000 or SFSymphony.org. — *Jason Victor Serinus*

C&C

EAST BAY

Classical & Opera

The Playmor The Layover, 7:30 pm, free

SAN FRANCISCO

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Christmas Day Brunch and Dinner with Elias Haslanger & Dorado Schmitt on piano Top of the Mark, 11 am-10 pm, $58, $99

Rock & Pop

Annual Bell & Lee Christmas Show Hotel Room, 8 pm, $30

Whole 4-Mass w/ The Feelers, [illegible] Brothers Brown, Les Mendocinos, [illegible] & [illegible] Thee Rummy, Kilo Room, 9 pm

SUNDAY 26

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Americana Unplugged Upstairs, 5 pm, free

Jimmy's All-Star Super Sessions Jimmy hosts a different blues outfit every week, Pete's Restaurant, 5 pm, free

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Tower of Power Yoshi's, 7 & 9 pm, $25-$45

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Army & Jimmy I w/ Dushane, Micael, & Jan Issac w/ The Rebel Tribe Band, Ashkenaz, 8 pm, $15-$17

Domingo de Rumba Afro-Cuban rumba percussion & dance party, Café Valparaiso, 7:30-10:30 pm, free

Israeli Folk Dancing with Allen King Ashkenaz, 1:30-5:30 pm, $8

SAN FRANCISCO

All Ages

Songwriter Sundays rotating artists perform in the lounge, Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 pm-midnight, $8

Blues, Folk & Country

Lounge: Songwriters Unplugged w/ Alex, Jeff Dentra, Hans York Yoshi's San Francisco, 8-11 pm, $7

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Karl Whalk Trio The Rondo, 7-10:30 pm, free

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Pachanga! Sunday salsa dance party w/ Orquesta La Moderna Tradición, DJ Caddy's Way, DJ Amando, & DJ Walrdge, DNA, 4-9:30 pm, $10

MONDAY 27

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

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THU 12/23 8:00 pm $10 — CARIBBEAN/AFRICAN/REGGAE **AFRICOMBO** Musical rhythms and styles from the African diaspora
SUN 12/26 1:30 pm $8 — FOLKDANCE **ISRAELI FOLKDANCE** with Allen King
SUN 12/26 8:00 pm $12 $10 advance — BOXING DAY REGGAE CELEBRATION **ARMY, DANNY I** + DUSHANE, MICAEL, JAN ISAAC WITH REBEL TRIBE BAND
TUE 12/28 8:30 pm $10 — CAJUN **SAUCE PIQUANTE** 8:00 pm Cajun/Zydeco dance lesson
WED 12/29 8:30 pm $10 — REGGAE/SKA/DUB **BIG TINGS** + FLAVOR OF THE MONTH CLUB
THU 12/30 8:30 pm $10 — BEATLES JAM BAND **THE RUBBER SOULDIERS** with The Rowan Brothers and David Gans
FRI 12/31 8:00 pm $20 — NEW YEAR'S EVE BALKAN BASH! **BRASS MENAZERI EDESSA JOE FINN & LESLIE BONNETT**

SUN 1/2 8:30 pm $10 — AFROBEAT HIP HOP JAZZ **IN MOTION TRIO** + special guests!
TUE 1/4 8:30 pm $10 — CAJUN **THE AUX CAJUNALS** 8:00 pm Cajun/Zydeco dance lesson
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C&C

[illegible] Bluegrass Experience w/ Jim Nunally, Keith Little, Chad Manning & Sam Grisman. Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse. 8 pm. $22.50-$24.50

Uptown [illegible] live burlesque w/ Hubba Hubba Revue. The Uptown. 9 pm. $5

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

The Lost Trio Led by Philip Greenlief, w/ [illegible]. [illegible]. 8-11 pm, free

The Project w/ [illegible], [illegible] Wiley, Garrett Taylor, [illegible] & special [illegible]. Jazzschool. 10 pm. $5

Rock & Pop

My Dads w/ Soto Location & T[illegible]. Mama Buzz. 7 pm, free

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Tower of Power Yoshi's. 8 & 10 pm. $25-$45

SAN FRANCISCO

Rock & Pop

Goose Weekend w/ Dylan Fox and The Waves & The Goodnight [illegible]. Slim's. 8:45 pm. $16

Oaklandia w/ Canyon Von Beethoven. The Independent. 8 pm. $11

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Morris Day & The Time Yoshi's San Francisco. 8 & 10 pm. $30-$45

TUESDAY 28

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Country [illegible] Night w/ [illegible]. Yianni's Bar & Grill. 7:30-11 pm, free

[illegible] Cajun/Zydeco Dance lesson with Cheryl McBride at 8:00 p.m. Ashkenaz. 8:30 pm. $10

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Jazzschool Tuesdays featuring students from the Berkeley music school. Jupiter. 8 pm, free

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Tower of Power Yoshi's. 8 & 10 pm. $25-$45

SAN FRANCISCO

Rock & Pop

Mellow Earth w/ [illegible]. [illegible]. 9 pm. $5

Spirits in the Basement w/ Filthy [illegible] Woods & Laughing [illegible]. [illegible] at the Hill. 8 pm. $8

X-Mas with X & special guest Roy [illegible]. Slim's. Dec. 28-29. 8 pm. $31

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] w/ Kevin Pitts, [illegible], Ruby Ibarra, & [illegible]. [illegible] Room. 7 pm. $8

WEDNESDAY 29

EAST BAY

Rock & Pop

Mod Night [illegible] Lounge. 5 pm, free

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Tower of Power Yoshi's. 8 & 10 pm. $25-$45

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Big Tongo Ashkenaz. 5 pm. $10

SAN FRANCISCO

Rock & Pop

The Room w/ [illegible]. Yoshi's San Francisco. 8 pm. $25

[illegible] w/ [illegible] & [illegible]. Elbo Room. 9:30 pm. $10

X-Mas with X & special guest Roy [illegible]. Slim's. 8 pm. $31

The Yellow [illegible] w/ Alright Class & Wolf Larsen. Bottom of the Hill. 9 pm. $8 ●

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[illegible] 3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-2082
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[illegible] 484 E. 14th St., San Leandro. [illegible]
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Yoshi's 510 Embarcadero West, Oakland. 510-238-9200
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DJ & DANCE

Editor's Note: Due to the holiday, we highly recommend that you call first to confirm events before leaving the house.

WEDNESDAY 22

SAN FRANCISCO

Club Aurora w/ DJs Pinch, Robot & Boots spinning goth. Elbo Room. 10 pm. $5
DJ Wattage spinning salsa & reggaeton. Little Baobab. 9 pm. $3
Element Social Club: Happy Club The Knockout. 9 pm. free
Satellite w/ rotating DJs TJ & Ant. 9 pm. free before 10 p.m. $6

THURSDAY 23

EAST BAY

Academy Night w/ DJ and VJ Jon G. spinning hip-hop, R&B, dancehall, & Top 40. White Horse Inn. 8 pm. 21. Element free w/ valid ID
Boots Good w/ DJs Blue Kaste & Chris Fox. Element Town Live. 9 pm. free
Vagrantia Thursdays Room. 21 pm. free
DJ Jerry Bell spinning soul, funk, hip-hop, R&B, & more. Easy Lounge. 10 pm. free
DJ Slick spinning lounge. Lost Weekend Lounge. 8 pm-2 am. free
Flight Two featuring DJ Dus Gasper. The Layover. 10 pm. free
Oakland Vibe featuring DJs Poison, Genie Joe. Luka's Taproom & Lounge. 10 pm. $5
Bruised DJ Zeph & host MC Amen spin classic hip-hop, reggae, & soul. Luka's Taproom & Lounge. 6 pm. free

Salsa Night w/ DJ Eddie T. plus Boots Inn-sono. Venue's Bar & Grill. 8 pm. $10
Selectas w/ DJ Wilder. Kasbar. 8 pm. free
Tasty ladies' night w/ DJ Mo Rooted spinning hip-hop & R&B. Club 21. 9 pm. $4 7-$15
Throwback Thursdays Element Nightclub. 7 pm. $4

SAN FRANCISCO

1984 DJs Dwight, Jukes, Dangerous Dan, & Melting Girl spin '80s & new wave. Cat Club. 9 pm. free before 9:30 p.m. $6
DJ Sweet & Vagabondz spinning world music. El Rio. 8 pm. free
Pacific Standard Time spinning DJ Leydis, Kaiser Al Day & Rina Gomez. Eye Lounge. 9 pm. free
Play Anything DJs spinning Pop, Funk, and Hip Hop all night. Milk. free
Solid Thursdays featuring DJ Danny Rolo, guests. Club Six. 9 pm. $5
Touch Top Thursdays w/ Jah Warrior Shelter Hi-Fi ... & I-Vibe spinning reggae. Club Six. 9 pm-2 am. $5, free before 11 p.m. w/ RSVP

FRIDAY 24

EAST BAY

Spinning w/ DJ Ryan DJ Ryan spinning the hottest music in the Bay Area. White Horse Inn. 9 pm. $5
Friday Night Salsa w/ Reina. DJs spinning salsa. La Estrellita Cafe. 10 pm. $5
Happy Hours w/ DJ Golden Boots spinning punk, rock, soul, & more. The Stork Club Lounge. 9-11 pm. free
Latin Explosion DJ Jorge Enrique Rubio spins salsa, merengue, bachata, Spanish pop, & house. Bench and Bar. 9 pm-2 am. $6-$15
Mighty Irie DJs Rocker-T, Irie Dole, & Smoke-One spin reggae, dancehall, & hip-hop. Luka's Taproom & Lounge. 10 pm. $20

Oldies Night with DJ Electro spinning reggae, soca, Latino & R&B. Boots Gasoline Club. 10 pm. ladies free before 11 p.m.
Reggae Fridays' DJs TJ99, Lower Bongo & Short Kut spin dancehall, reggae, & R&B. New Karibbean City. 9:30 pm-1:30 am. $5 to $10
Retro-licious Daniel Imanu hosts '80s new night. Kingman's Lucky Lounge. 9 pm. free
Stilley Fridays Eptash & Fat Rob spin R&B & soul. Kimball's Carnival. 9 pm. $5
Boots Club Fridays featuring DJ People spinning Jamaican, soca, samba, Balkan, merengue, dancehall, reggae, Bhangra, Arabic music, & more. Congo Lounge. 10 pm

SAN FRANCISCO

DJ Danny Rosario spinning rock, hip-hop, new wave, R&B, '80s, Punk, & pop. Swig Bar. 8 pm. free
Element Fridays w/ rotating DJs spinning hip-hop, R&B, rock, & more. Element Lounge. 8 pm. $5
Fridays At the Fruit Boots w/ DJs Carmen & Miranda spinning soul, funk, & world. El Rio. 6-9 pm. free
Bus Boots w/ DJs Chateau Club, Bended Yard Chef, & special guests spinning '80s, electro, hip-hop, & R&B. Cat Club. 9 pm. $5
Loose Joints w/ DJ Tom Thump and Guests. Make-Out Room. 10 pm. $5
Paris Dakar International DJs Siegal and Marty spin reggae, dancehall, Afro-pop, soul, & R&B. Little Baobab. 6 pm. $5
VIP Fridays w/ rotating DJs from the Bay Area and around the world spinning hip-hop. Vessel. 6 pm. $10

SUNDAY 26

EAST BAY

Boots by Boutique Major Arch, & more. Easy Lounge. 9 pm. free
Club Congo Seven and Bar. 5 pm. $8
Crooked on a Sunday Afternoon DJ Boogie spins soul, funk, disco, Latin, house, jazz, reggae, & more. Kitty's. 2 pm. free
La Vaquerita Seven and Bar. 5 pm. $6-$8
Mojo w/ DJ Marvel spinning soul, funk, & Afrocentric old-school. Boots Blue & Lounge. 8 pm. free
The Soul-Full Club DJ Azul Dee & guests spin soulful. Crooked Luka's Taproom & Lounge. 9 pm. free
Spinning Skills DJ Boots hosts spins rhythm & old-school for bar & restaurant staff. Kingman's Lucky Lounge. 6 pm. free

SAN FRANCISCO

Dub Crooked w/ DJ Sep, Maneesh the Twister, & guests spinning dub, Roots, & dancehall reggae. Elbo Room. 6 pm. $5
Dusty Sundays w/ Henry Soundsystem DJs spinning dance music. Paradise Lounge. 6 pm. $3 after 11 p.m.
Stars Wild DJ Vortex & guests spin new wave, punk, & funk. Pinko. 6 pm. free
Sunday T-Dance w/ DJs Adnan, Boots, Nikola Baytala, Hikaru, Jim Hopkins, Carera, Hawthorne Tag, Brigham, DMoth, John Early, & more. The EndUp. 6 am-8 pm. $20

MONDAY 27

EAST BAY

DJ Augs spinning dub, ska, & soul. Easy Lounge. 6 pm. free
Club Stick & Bobo w/ Club 4 p.m.-9 p.m., B-Mike 9 p.m.-2 a.m. Club 1220. 4 pm-2 am. free
Mystery Night Bobo DJs spin hip-hop, new wave, & electro. Ruby Room. 10 pm-2 am. free
Underground Lounge psycho '60s & porno '70s music. Radio. 10 pm-2 am. free
Spinning Skills DJ Dante Bobo spins rhythm & old-school for bar & restaurant staff. Kingman's Lucky Lounge. 8 pm. free

SAN FRANCISCO

Boots Club Glas Kat. 9:30 pm. $3 before 10 p.m. $5
Element Glam Night live bands, spinners followed by DJs spinning all things "steel" and ... Milk. $5
Karaoke Boots presented by Danny Kravitz, the Karaoke Singer. The Cellar. 8 pm. free
Boots-Lover w/ DJ Orlando plus bands. Cafe Cocomo. 7:30 pm. $8, lessons $10
Aurora, Vinyl DJ Jerry Booted spins an eclectic mix of vinyl til the 11 pm-1 am. $5
Spliff Sessions w/ DJs Mahmood, Kung Fu Chris, & C-Moore spinning funk, soul, hip-hop, '80s boogie, jazz, Latin, and Afrobeat. Tunnel Top. 10 pm. free

TUESDAY 28

EASY BAY

DJ Isaac Boots Money spinning rock, funk, punk, new wave, & more. The Crooked Lounge. 10 pm. free
Escape college night spinning DJ Speedy & DJ Fuzzy. Club 21. 9 pm. free
Soul Fyah DJs Serg, Soul Kyle & guests spin reggae, dancehall, & classics. Luka's Taproom & Lounge. 10 pm. free
Soul Fyah Luka's Taproom & Lounge. 10 pm.

SAN FRANCISCO

Raise Up Jah Warrior Shelter DJs Jah Yzer Irie, & Mr. Tribe spin reggae, dancehall, & hip-hop. Free before 11 p.m., Milk. 10 pm. $5
Bondgeez Cat Fancy & Ell the Funky Gine-paw spin funky soul, girl groups, oldies, escape rock, '60s San Francisco sound, & more. The Knockout. 10 pm. free
Pacific Satellite Time hip-hop & soul w/ DJ Sake-1 plus live guests. 330 Ritch. 10 pm. $5
Nowogah w/ DJs Chicken Booted, Sorry Fox, Derrick D, MCD & guests spinning live '90s and early '00s hip-hop. The Cellar. 10 pm. free

PICK

Soul Fyah

Anyone who has attended the world music and dancehall nights at **Club Oasis** witnessed the god-like powers of **DJ Fuze** at one point or another. Originally a hip-hop DJ, he backed **Digital Underground** in the 1990s and co-produced the Hieroglyphics hit single "Freaks of the Industry." Today he's primarily known for splicing Afro-Latin dance music in all of its incarnations: reggae, rock-steady, lovers rock, calypso, zouk, Jamaican soul. He'll appear this Tuesday, Dec. 28, at **Soul Fyah**, a weekly event conceived and hosted by **DJ Serg** at **Luka's Taproom** (2221 Broadway, Oakland). Serg's mixes — many of which are available as free podcasts — find new, imaginative ways to cannibalize pop music (like setting a reggae groove over a **Lloyd Banks** beat). 10 p.m., free. LukasOakland.com — *Rachel Swan*

LUKA'S
TAPROOM & LOUNGE

VOTED BEST PLACE TO DANCE & BEST PICK UP BAR
EAST BAY EXPRESS

WED 9PM Free	THE JET SET DJ SANTERO new weekly international dance featuring the latest grooves from Africa, Asia, America & beyond!
THUR 10PM	JUNGLE BOOGIE DJs POIZEN, KOOL KYLE & UNCLE JOE hip hop, soul & your requests!
FRI 10PM $10	MIGHTY IRIE DJs ROCKER-T, SMOKE-ONE & IRIE DOLE reggae, hip hop & dancehall
SAT	CLOSED FOR XMAS
SUN 9PM Free	THE SOUL FULL GLOW RESIDENT DJ AEBL DEE soulful music for dancing - Get up!!!
MON 9PM Free	THREE DAY WEEKEND DJs C MOSES & MOROCCO SLIM all vinyl hip hop & soul classics
TUES 10PM Free	SOUL FYAH DJ SERG & LEGENDARY DJ FUZE & SOUL PROFESS reggae, dancehall, roots rock & remixes

New Year's Eve @ Luka's!!!

The Oakland Faders DJs SPAIR & MERE will be holding down the dancefloor along with a live performance from OPIO of the World Famous HIEROGLYPHICS Crew.

LUKA'S TAPROOM & LOUNGE
2221 BROADWAY @ W GRAND · OAKLAND
WWW.LUKASOAKLAND.COM

Starry Plough

$3 OFF ANY SHOW WITH VALID STUDENT ID

THU 12/23 9PM $8 — NINE POUND SHADOW
THE HAPPY CLAMS

FRI 12/24 + SAT 12/25 — CLOSED FOR THE HOLIDAYS! MERRY CHRISTMAS!

$6 PBR PITCHERS
7 DAYS A WEEK
4-8PM

SUNDAYS 8:30 PM
IRISH MUSIC SESSION W/ SHAY BLACK

TUESDAYS
7:30 PM • FREE
OPEN MIC W/ JUAN PEZ

MONDAYS
7:00 PM LESSON, 8:00 PM DANCING / FREE
TRADITIONAL IRISH DANCE & CEILI

WEDNESDAYS
9:00 PM • $7 DOOR
BERKELEY POETRY SLAM
Featuring local and touring poets. $5 w/ cost-pr ...

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Berkeley 510.841.2082

Shattuck Down Low

WED 22ND:
ORQUESTRA BAKAN

THURS 23RD:
"DAMN GINA"
DJ'S KON, KARLO & CHRIS FOX

SUN. 26TH:
"KING OF KING'S"
DJ'S SMOKE ONE & AEBL DEE
roots, rock, reggae

WED 29TH:
MONTUNO SWING

FRI 31ST:
TAKE FLIGHT
NEW YEARS EVE WITH
10G BOB KALRISSIAN
INSPECTOR DOUBLE NEGATIVE

TUESDAYS: ROCKSTAR KARAOKE!
8PM SIGN UPS

COMING UP:
BLUE LIGHT RIVER :: JAN 7TH
THE HUNDRED DAYS :: JAN 14TH

2284 SHATTUCK AVE : DOWNTOWN BERKELEY
510.548.1159 · SHATTUCKDOWNLOW.COM

La Peña

3105 SHATTUCK AVE. BERKELEY 510-849-2568

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31
NEW YEAR'S EVE FIESTA

ORQUESTA LA MODERNA TRADICION

TICKETS IN ADVANCE HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

RENT LA PEÑA
PLAN YOUR COMMUNITY ACTIVITY WITH US

High Street Station

1303 HIGH ST — ALAMEDA CA

THURSDAYS OPEN MIC

BUFFET FRI. & SAT 6-8 PM

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DECEMBER 23 7 PM
RENAISSANCE CHRISTMAS CAROLS & SINGALONG WITH MARGARET AND KRISTOPH OF AVALON RISING

12/24-1/02
CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF THE HOLIDAYS

Classifieds

Contact Us

Ads can be placed Mon - Fri during Business hours by calling 510-879-3700 or by E-mailing: [illegible]

Online

[illegible]

Ad Deadline

[illegible]

LEGAL NOTICES

Fictitious Business Name Statement File I 445779

The following individual is doing business as **Blue Earth Consultants** [illegible] Address, [illegible] Oakland, CA [illegible] Mailing Address: Same as above, is hereby registered by the following owner [illegible] This business is conducted by a Limited liability company. The registrant began to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. This Statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Alameda County on 12/[illegible]/2010

Blue Earth Consultants
12/15, 12/22, 12/29, 1/5/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement File I 445[illegible]

The following individual is doing business as **Light Seeker Photography; Light Seeker Photo; Light and Shadow Business** Street Address, [illegible] Ave., Oakland, CA [illegible] Mailing Address: Same as above, is hereby registered by the following owner: [illegible] Oakland, CA [illegible] This business is conducted by an individual. The registrant began to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. This Statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Alameda County on 12/[illegible]/2010

Light Seeker Photography; Light Seeker Photo; Light and Shadow Business
12/15, 12/22, 1/5, 1/12/2010

Fictitious Business Name Statement File I 445[illegible]

The following individual is doing business as [illegible] Street Address [illegible] Berkeley, CA [illegible] Mailing Address: Same as above, is hereby registered by the following owner: [illegible] Berkeley, CA [illegible] This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant began to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. This Statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Alameda County on 11/22/2010

[illegible]
12/15, 12/22, 12/29, 1/5/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement File I 446[illegible]

The following individual is doing business as **[illegible]** Street Address: [illegible] Oakland, CA [illegible] Mailing Address: Same as above, is hereby registered by the following owner: [illegible] Berkeley, CA [illegible] This business is conducted by an individual. The registrant began to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 11/[illegible]/10. This Statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Alameda County on 11/[illegible]/2010

[illegible]
12/1, 12/8, 12/15, 12/22/2010

Fictitious Business Name Statement File I 445[illegible]

The following individual is doing business as **[illegible]** Street Address, 2[illegible] High St, Oakland, CA 94601. Mailing Address: Same as above, is hereby registered by the following owners: [illegible] High St, Oakland, CA [illegible] This business is conducted by a General partnership. The registrant began to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on [illegible]/2010. This document was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Alameda County on 12/[illegible]/2010

[illegible]
12/29, 12/22, 12/29, 1/5/11

Fictitious Business Name Statement File I [illegible]

The following individual is doing business as **Will's Bicycle Shop** Street Address [illegible] Hayward, CA [illegible] Mailing Address: Same as above, is hereby registered by the following owner: [illegible] This business is conducted by an individual. The registrant began to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. This Statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Alameda County on 11/23/2010.

Will's Bicycle Shop
12/22, 12/29, 1/5, 1/12/2010

Statement of Abandonment of use of Fictitious Business Name Statement File I 4[illegible]

The following individual has abandoned the use of the Fictitious Business Name **B & B Travel** Street Address, [illegible] Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707. The fictitious Business Name Statement was filed on [illegible] in the County of Alameda. Mailing Address: Same As Above; is hereby registered by the following owners: [illegible] Berkeley, CA 94707. This business was conducted by Husband and wife. This Statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Alameda County on 12/[illegible]/2010.

B & B Travel
12/15, 12/22, 12/29, 1/5/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement File I 445[illegible]

The following individual is doing business as **Emeryville Sports Physical Therapy** Street Address, [illegible] Powell St., Emeryville, CA 94608. Mailing Address: Same as above, is hereby registered by the following owner: [illegible] Inc., [illegible] Powell St., Emeryville, CA 94608. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant began to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 1/7/2008. This Statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Alameda County on 12/1/2010

Emeryville Sports Physical Therapy
12/15, 12/22, 12/29, 1/5/2011

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER: [illegible]

Superior Court of California, County of Alameda [illegible] Street Oakland, CA 94612

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner MARIA [illegible] SALAZAR [illegible] filed a petition with this court for a decree changing name as follows: Present Name: MARIA [illegible] SALAZAR [illegible] to Proposed Name: [illegible] SALAZAR [illegible]. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: April 1, 2011 at 11:00 A.M. in Dept. [illegible] at 201 13th Street, Oakland CA 94612. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once a week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: East Bay Express, Alameda County, California. Dated: December 17, 2010. Signed: [illegible] Judge of the Superior Court

12/22, 12/29, 1/5, 1/12/2010

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER: [illegible]

Superior Court of California County of Alameda Fremont Hall of Justice 39439 Paseo Padre Parkway Fremont, CA 94538

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner [illegible] filed a petition with the court for a decree changing name as follows: Present Name: [illegible] to Proposed Name: [illegible]. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: February [illegible], 2011, at [illegible] P.M. in Dept. [illegible] 39439 Paseo Padre Parkway, Fremont, CA 94538. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once a week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: East Bay Express, Alameda County. Dated: [illegible] 2, 2010. Signed: Jon R. Rolefson Judge of the Superior Court

12/22, 12/29, 1/5, 1/12/2010

Statement of Abandonment Of Use Of Business Name File I 371[illegible]

The following partner(s) has abandoned the use of the fictitious business name **The Edge of Each Other's Battles Project** [illegible] Oakland, CA [illegible] The fictitious business name statement was filed on [illegible] in the County of Alameda. Mailing Address: [illegible] Oakland, CA [illegible] is hereby registered by the following owner: [illegible] This business was conducted by [illegible] This Statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Alameda County on 12/[illegible]/2010.

The Edge of Each Other's Battles Project
12/22, 12/29, 1/5, 1/12/2010

Fictitious Business Name Statement File I 445[illegible]

The following individual is doing business as **[illegible]** Street Address: [illegible] Oakland, CA [illegible] Mailing Address: Same as above, is hereby registered by the following owner: [illegible] Oakland, CA [illegible] This business is conducted by an individual. The registrant began to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. This Statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Alameda County on [illegible]/2010.

[illegible]
12/1, 12/8, 12/15, 12/22/2010

Fictitious Business Name Statement File I 446[illegible]

The following individual is doing business as **[illegible]** Street Address: [illegible] Berkeley, CA [illegible] Mailing Address: [illegible] is hereby registered by the following owner: [illegible] This business is conducted by an individual. The registrant began to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 12/[illegible]/2010. This Statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Alameda County on 12/[illegible]/2010.

[illegible]
12/22, 12/29, 1/5, 1/12/2010

Fictitious Business Name Statement File I 445[illegible]

The following individual is doing business as **[illegible]** Street Address: [illegible] Berkeley, CA [illegible] Mailing Address: P.O. Box [illegible] Berkeley, CA [illegible] is hereby registered by the following owner: [illegible] Berkeley, CA [illegible] This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant began to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on [illegible]. This Statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Alameda County on [illegible]/2010.

[illegible]
12/22, 12/29, 1/5, 1/12/2010

Fictitious Business Name Statement File I 445[illegible]

The following individual is doing business as **[illegible]** Street Address: [illegible] Las Positas Blvd., Pleasanton, CA 94588. Mailing Address: Same as above, is hereby registered by the following owner: [illegible] Inc., [illegible] Las Positas Blvd., Pleasanton, CA 94588. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant began to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 1/24/04. This Statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Alameda County on 12/13/2010.

[illegible]
12/22, 12/29, 1/5, 1/12/2010

Fictitious Business Name Statement File I 445[illegible]

The following individual is doing business as **The Punchdown** Street Address: 2212 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94612. Mailing Address: Same as above, is hereby registered by the following owner: [illegible] LLC 2212 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94612. This business is conducted by a Limited liability company. The registrant began to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 12/[illegible]/2010. This Statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Alameda County on 12/[illegible]/2010

The Punchdown
12/22, 12/29, 1/5, 1/12/2010

Fictitious Business Name Statement File I 445[illegible]

The following individual is doing business as **Sign [illegible]** Street Address: [illegible] Broadway [illegible] Alameda, CA 94501. Mailing Address: Same as above, is hereby registered by the following owner: [illegible] Broadway [illegible] Alameda, CA 94501. This business is conducted by an individual. The registrant began to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. This Statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Alameda County on 11/[illegible]/2010.

Sign [illegible]
12/15, 12/22, 12/29, 1/5/11

Fictitious Business Name Statement File I 444[illegible]

The following individual is doing business as **[illegible]** Street Address: [illegible] Oakland, CA [illegible] Mailing Address: Same as above, is hereby registered by the following owners: [illegible] Oakland, CA 94610. This business is conducted by Husband and wife. The registrant began to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. This Statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Alameda County on 11/[illegible]/2010.

[illegible]
12/1, 12/8, 12/15, 12/22/2010

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Gain National Exposure

Reach [illegible] active, educated readers for only $[illegible] by advertising in 11 [illegible] newspapers like this one and the East Bay Express. Find out how **510-[illegible]**

PETS/PET SUPPLIES

Homes for the Holidays: Adopt Dogs $[illegible], Cats/Kit-tens $[illegible]

Thru [illegible] adopt a [illegible] from the Oakland Animal Services for only $[illegible] and any cat/kitten [illegible] Fee includes spay/neuter, microchip, & vaccinations. [illegible] To see more of our adoptable animals, and for hours/directions, visit [illegible] 1101 29th Ave., Oakland [illegible]

eDEALS

Shop Online for Half-Price Gift Certificates

EastBayExpress.com/eDeals

Shop for gift certificates to your favorite local restaurants and stores at 50 percent off the retail value.

This Week's Featured eDeal:

Miam Miam Lounge

Indulge your tastebuds with small batch artisanal gelato, microroasted organic coffee and ten various flavors of non fat frozen yogurt served every day of the week.

Retail Price: $25 eDeals Price: $12.50

5856 College Avenue Oakland 510 658.1500 www.[illegible].com

Acme Bar
Arena Restaurant & Catering
Awaken Café
Bar Kitty's
Destiny Arts Center
Down Home Music
E.Wear
Expose Fashion Café
Lakeshore Café
Lost Weekend Lounge

Mimosa Ethiopian Café
Missouri Lounge
Nefa Salon
Oakland East Bay Symphony
Oakland Grill
Oakland [illegible] Foods
[illegible]

On the Spot Massage
Pacific Coast Brewing Co.
Radiant Images Laser Center
Site for Sore Eyes
The Terrace Room
[illegible] Restaurant
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
Symmetry Chiropractic
Trax Gallery
Vault Café

EAST BAY EXPRESS

TS # CA-10-[illegible] Order # [illegible]-CA-[illegible] NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED [illegible]. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. A public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash, cashier's check drawn on a state or national bank, check drawn by a state or federal credit union, or a check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, or savings association, or savings bank specified in Section 5102 to the Financial Code and authorized to do business in this state, will be held by duly appointed trustee. The sale will be made, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the note(s) secured by the Deed of Trust, with interest and late charges thereon, as provided in the note(s), advances, under the terms of the Deed of Trust, interest thereon, fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee for the total amount (at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale) reasonably estimated to be set forth below. The amount may be greater on the day of sale. BENEFICIARY MAY ELECT TO BID LESS THAN THE TOTAL AMOUNT DUE. Trustor(s): [illegible] Recorded: [illegible] as Instrument No. [illegible] in book xxx, page xxx of Official Records in the Office of the Recorder of Alameda County, California; Date of Sale: [illegible]/2011 at 12:00 PM Place of Sale: At the Fallon Street entrance to the Alameda County Courthouse, 1225 Fallon St., Oakland, CA Amount of unpaid balance and other charges: $[illegible] The purported property address is: [illegible] Emeryville, CA 94608 Assessor's Parcel No. [illegible] The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the property address or other common designation, if any, shown herein. If no street address or other common designation is shown, please refer to the referenced legal description for property location. In the event no common address or common designation of the property is provided herein directions to the location of the property may be obtained within 10 days of the date of first publication of this Notice of Sale by sending a written request to CitiMortgage, Inc. 1111 Northpoint Drive Coppell, TX 75019 Pursuant to California Civil Code §2923.54 the undersigned, on behalf of the beneficiary, loan servicer or authorized agent, declares as follows: [1] The mortgage loan servicer has obtained from the commissioner a final or temporary order of exemption pursuant to Section 2923.53 that is current and valid on the date the notice of sale is filed; [2] The timeframe for giving notice of sale specified in subdivision (a) of Section 2923.52 does not apply pursuant to Section 2923.52. If the Trustee is unable to convey title for any reason, the successful bidder's sole and exclusive remedy shall be the return of monies paid to the Trustee, and the successful bidder shall have no further recourse. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled only to a return of the deposit paid. The Purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee, or the Mortgagee's Attorney. Date: Quality Loan Service Corp. 2141 5th Avenue San Diego, CA 92101 619-645-7711 For NON SALE information only Sale Line: 714-573-1965 or Login to: www.[illegible].com Reinstatement Line: 866-450-3122 Quality Loan Service, Corp. If you have previously been discharged through bankruptcy, you may have been released of personal liability for this loan in which case this letter is intended to exercise the note holder's rights against the real property only. This notice is sent for the purpose of collecting a debt. This firm is attempting to collect a debt on behalf of the holder and owner of the note. Any information obtained by or provided to this firm or the creditor will be used for that purpose. As required by law, you are hereby notified that a negative credit report reflecting on your credit record may be submitted to a credit report agency if you fail to fulfill the terms of your credit obligations. P[illegible] 12/22, 12/29, 01/05/2011

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE Trustee Sale No. 445054CA Loan No. 3017560034 Title Order No. [illegible] YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED 08-07-2007. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. On 01-06-2011 at 12:30 PM, CALIFORNIA RECONVEYANCE COMPANY as the duly appointed Trustee under and pursuant to Deed of Trust Recorded 08-23-2007, Book , Page , Instrument 2007309768 of official records in the Office of the Recorder of ALAMEDA County, California, [illegible]

[illegible] YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED 2/23/2007. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. On 12/[illegible] at 12:00 PM CALIFORNIA RECONVEYANCE COMPANY as the duly appointed Trustee under and pursuant to Deed of Trust Recorded 03/[illegible]/2007 [illegible]

[illegible]

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE [illegible] YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED [illegible] 2007. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. On 12-29-2010 at 12:30 PM, CALIFORNIA RECONVEYANCE COMPANY as the duly appointed Trustee under and pursuant to Deed of Trust Recorded [illegible]

[illegible]

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE Trustee Sale No. 20100015005171 Title Order No.: 100320937 FHA/VA/PMI No.: YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST, DATED 11/10/2004. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. NDEX WEST, LLC, as duly appointed Trustee under and pursuant to Deed of Trust Recorded on 11/30/2004 as Instrument No. 2004527758 of official records in the office of the County Recorder of ALAMEDA County, State of CALIFORNIA. EXECUTED BY: ELDRIDGE K DAVIS AND STEPHANIE T DAVIS, WILL SELL AT PUBLIC AUCTION TO HIGHEST BIDDER FOR CASH, CASHIER'S CHECK/CASH EQUIVALENT or other form of payment authorized by 2924h(b), (payable at time of sale in lawful money of the United States). DATE OF SALE: 01/11/2011 TIME OF SALE: 12:30 PM PLACE OF SALE: AT THE FALLON STREET ENTRANCE TO THE COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 1225 FALLON STREET, OAKLAND, CA. STREET ADDRESS and other common designation, if any, of the real property described above is purported to be: 6441 ESSEX STREET, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94608 APN#: 016-1449-007 The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. Said sale will be made, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the note(s) secured by said Deed of Trust, with interest thereon, as provided in said note(s), advances, under the terms of said Deed of Trust, fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the trusts created by said Deed of Trust. The total amount of the unpaid balance of the obligation secured by the property to be sold and reasonable estimated costs, expenses and advances at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale is $387,077.29. The beneficiary under said Deed of Trust heretofore executed and delivered to the undersigned a written Declaration of Default and Demand for Sale, and a written Notice of Default and Election to Sell. The undersigned caused said Notice of Default and Election to Sell to be recorded in the county where the real property is located. FOR TRUSTEE SALE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL: AGENCY SALES & POSTING 3210 EL CAMINO REAL, SUITE 200 IRVINE, CA 92602 714-730-2727 www.lpsasap.com NDEx West, L.L.C. MAY BE ACTING AS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. NDEx West, L.L.C. as Trustee Dated: 12/17/2010 NDEx West, L.L.C. 15000 Surveyor Boulevard, Suite 500 Addison, Texas 75001-9013 Telephone: (866) 795-1852 Telecopier: (972) 661-7800 ASAP# 3854709 12/22/2010, 12/29/2010, 01/05/2011

SAVAGE LOVE

CHEATING, BUT NOT A PIECE OF SHIT

And an uncertain gay brother of the bride

By Dan Savage

I'm writing to you under the influence of a little alcohol (as I'm not sure I'd have the courage to write to you about this sober). I've got an awkward situation.

My mother left her e-mail logged in on my computer, and I decided to be an asshole and snoop out of boredom. I honestly wasn't expecting anything, but I found a few intimate e-mails between her and a strange man that pretty much confirmed that she was cheating on my dad.

My parents have been married for almost three decades, and it's kind of an understatement to say he's an antisocial psycho. He restricted her from so many things during their marriage — partly for religious/cultural reasons — and honestly did not appreciate what he had. He's been a physical wreck for most of their marriage and has no personality to compensate. (I could go on about how abusive and fucked up his personality was during my childhood, but that's a whole other issue.) My mother, on the other hand, is one of the nicest and most caring people you could ever meet. She's also "hot" — a lot of my friends (male and female) have pointed that out to me, as awkward as that is.

Okay: Dad's an abusive asshole and borderline psycho, and Mom's a beautiful woman with a lot of opportunities and social skills. The only reason she didn't leave him was to keep the family together and for those same stupid cultural reasons. But it's hard knowing my mom is a CPOS. It's killing my older brother, who is close to her, and it's making him really depressed. He feels betrayed, because for years he's defended her against my father when he accuses her of cheating and calls her a whore. So what I want advice on is how the hell to confront her about it. I know I snooped in her e-mail, and I know that was wrong. So what the hell to say?

Mother Obliterated Monogamy

Here's what you say to your mother: "Good for you, Mom."

But you're going to say it under your breath, MOM: audible but not quite loud enough for your mother to hear.

Because you're not going to confront her about this affair or any other affair that you might uncover between now and your father's death, and you're not going to tell your mom you snooped, and you and your brother are going to go right on defending your mother to your father, and you're going to show a little respect — a little retroactive respect — for your mother's privacy by pretending that you don't know what you do know.

Is that clear?

Your mom sounds like a lovely woman, MOM, and you and your brother should be happy that she managed to find a little solace, a little love and tenderness, in the arms of a man who isn't a raving asshole. She deserves that, doesn't she? As for the CPOS label, that gets slapped only on people who cheat without cause, MOM, and it sure sounds like your mom had cause. Which means she's not a cheating piece of shit. She's cheating on a piece of shit.

Yes, yes. Maybe your mom should've divorced your father or had him murdered, but for reasons that will only ever be known to her, MOM, she decided that keeping her family intact — maybe for cultural reasons, maybe for her boys — was more important than remaining faithful to an antisocial psycho. It's easy to say that cheating is always wrong and to call everyone who cheats a POS, but sometimes an affair is the least worst option.

As for your brother's feelings of betrayal: Maybe your dad was right and your mom was cheating on him throughout their marriage and his tirades were justified and your brother was a fool to defend your mother. Or maybe your mom decided, after being accused of cheating again and again, and after being called a whore again and again, that if she was going to be accused, indicted, and tried for that particular crime, she might as well have the pleasure of committing it. Encourage your brother to give your mother the benefit of the doubt. It sounds like she deserves it.

I'm a 28-year-old gay man. My only sibling is getting married next year, and I'm stoked! My family doesn't support my gayness. My mom has met my boyfriend only once and refused to be in his presence for more than two minutes. Should I bring my boyfriend to my sister's wedding or ask him to stay home? My invitation came with only my name on it.

Brother Of The Bride

You say, "Hey, Sis. Looking forward to the wedding. I've been seeing a great guy for two years now, as you know, and I'm planning on bringing him to the wedding."

If she says, "Don't bring him. It'll just piss off Mom," then you say, "I'm coming with my boyfriend or I'm not coming at all — and remember, Sis, one day Mom will be dead and it's just going to be you and me. So in the long run, you should be more concerned about pissing me off than pissing Mom off."

And if she says, "Don't bring him. I don't want your gay boyfriend at my wedding," then you say, "If you don't want gays at your wedding, Sis, then you shouldn't have invited me. I want to be there — but if I come, I'm bringing my boyfriend."

Have the confrontation now, so that you can't be accused of trying to make trouble/drama right before your sister's wedding. But you need to seize this opportunity to dictate terms to your family: They can have their homophobia or they can have you in their lives — but they can't have both. ●

Find the Savage Lovecast (my weekly podcast) every Tuesday at thestranger.com/savage.

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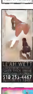
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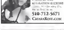

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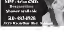

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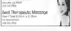

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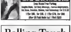

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